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# BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY

A Contrast and a Parallel

By J. Estlin Carpenter

D.D., D.Litt.

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*Introduction*

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THE origin of this book is soon told. In 1922 the Committee of the Jowett Lecture, founded by Mrs. Humphry Ward in connexion with the Settlement which now bears her name, did me the honour to invite me to deliver four lectures on "Buddhism and Christianity." No suggestions were made to me as to the treatment of this great theme. With a generous confidence I was left free to shape it as I could. The lectures were given in the latter part of the last winter. As their possible publication had been contemplated from the outset, they are now printed in the expanded form in which they were first written, and from which they were condensed for oral delivery.

Within the limits of four discourses much had to be left unsaid. Only the most salient points of likeness or contrast could be presented. Apart from its purely historic interest as a potent influence over immense populations in Eastern Asia since the days of Asoka, more than 2,000 years ago, the religious significance of Buddhism lies in the fact that a scheme of thought which

began by rejecting all ontological ideas found it necessary to admit them. Both Gotāma and Jesus employed much of the religious language of their time, though they started with widely different attitudes to contemporary institutions. In the course of time each faith adopted a current philosophical conception to interpret the person of its founder. The steps of the process are more obscure in Buddhism than in Christianity, but the results are strangely parallel. Both aim at bringing man into conscious fellowship with God. The means may be different, but the purpose is the same. There are varieties of method in Buddhism just as there are in Christianity, and the student who seeks to compare them is constantly struck by the appearance of similar phases of thought and experience under dissimilar dogmatic forms. Each manifested a remarkable power of adaptation to varieties of social environment, of racial character, of philosophical reflection. Each produced within itself methods of treating its central facts or its essential ideas. Yet each retained its fundamental connexion with the source of its development, and whatever other elements enriched its life upon the way its ethical ideals and the goal of its activities remained the same. In spite of all the resemblances which result from

common moral aims, each remains a unity within itself, transcending the elements of inner diversity, and blends their oppositions in a vaster whole. In the sphere of immediate observation they have only just begun to confront each other. What grounds for mutual appreciation or respect will they discover?

A general knowledge of the phases of Christianity may be assumed; those of Buddhism are described at greater length. To illustrate their affinities is the object of these discourses. For the intricate enquiry into their possible historic relations the limits of four lectures provided no space. The problems presented by the peculiar institutions of Tibet, for example, are left untouched. Here and there they have been carried farther back, but for their adequate discussion there was no room. Within India itself the reciprocal indebtedness of Buddhism and Hinduism, in ethics, philosophy, and religion, has been too little studied, and until further literature from the Mahā-Yāna schools is made available theories of foreign influence must be held in suspense. Doubtless the last word on the reciprocal influences of East and West has not been said. Recent research has opened up new paths in many directions. But before attempting to account for the facts, the facts themselves so

far as at present known must be understood. To give some help to those who enter on their study is the aim of these lectures. Their bearing on theories of the Absolute the student himself must decide.

J. ESTLIN CARPENTER.

OXFORD.

*April 6, 1923*

**B**UDDHISM and Christianity—the terms represent two great historical generalisations. Each starts from a single personality whose activity could cover but a limited area and last, at the outside, for a human life. But each contained within it germs of growth and potencies of development which carried it over vast areas, spread its influence over alien races, absorbed fresh modes of thought, assumed an immense variety of forms, and profoundly affected both intellectual, moral, and social culture.

## I

Older by five centuries than its later rival, Buddhism gradually spread from the Ganges Valley through India. Carried by a princely missionary, son of the great Emperor Asoka, into Ceylon, it is borne in due time to Burma and Siam. In Central Asia it builds temples and creates libraries long since overwhelmed by desolating storms of sand, but when planted in China—just as Christianity is being launched into the Roman Empire—it finds a firm foothold.

Southward it makes its way into the kingdoms of Camboja, Champa, and Annam. It secures a home in Java, it becomes established in Tibet, and spreads into Mongolia. Through Corea it is transmitted across the sea to Japan, and some half-century before Augustine raises the cross at Canterbury, a statue of the Buddha, copies of the sacred books, banners, and relics, are presented to the imperial court. Under the Emperor Suiko (593-621) Prince Shotoku remodels the constitution in seventeen articles, and himself lectures on the new religion—his manuscripts are still carefully preserved—and a temple is built with hospital, dispensary, and asylum attached. Thus, while Christianity possessed but a few scattered settlements in the Indian seas, Buddhism made its way through the multifarious populations of Further Asia, and even when it had decayed in India it still affected far vaster numbers than the Western Churches of Europe and the Near East, or the latest born of the three great missionary religions, Islam.

No scheme of thought and life capable of this wide diffusion could under any circumstances be treated as insignificant. Primarily instituted as a system of ethical culture based on a special view of the meaning of existence, it soon called literature to its aid in recording the teachings

of the founder. Collections of discourses were started orally, soon after his death, and the Scriptures now accepted as authoritative in Ceylon, Burma, and Siam far exceed the limits of the Bible. In China the work of translations from Sanskrit texts was begun in the first century of our era. In succeeding generations catalogues of such translations and original works were made from time to time under imperial order; the oldest now existing, compiled in A.D. 520 under the Emperor Wu (502-549), contained more than 2,200 items; the last, published in 1737 with an imperial preface, enumerates 1,662 titles.\* Such tasks could only have been executed by a marvel of enthusiasm and patience. The linguistic difficulties were enormous, as Indian idioms of thought and speech were adapted to different modes of expression. New terminology was needed, and the immense length of the Hindu books made enormous demands on the translator's energy. The labours of Jerome in his cell at Bethlehem on the Latin rendering of the Hebrew of the Old Testament were child's play compared with Yuan Chwang's task in produc-

\* This represents the great collection made under the Ming dynasty, A.D. 1368-1644. This collection was published in Japan, 1678-1681, and a copy is now in the library of the India Office, London.

ing a version of the *Prajñā Pāramitā* or the Perfect Gnosis, a group of works estimated at twenty-five times the length of the whole Bible. It was the occupation of four years after his return from India in A.D. 644.

Treatises such as these implied a wide philosophical background. The Buddha's teaching had raised many questions, and contact with the speculations of the Brahmanical schools had brought fresh elements of thought into view which profoundly modified the original doctrine and called for elaborate literary expression. From the outset Buddhism had appealed strongly to the cultivated and intellectual laity. Instruction was a constant duty imposed on the members of the Order. The great monasteries became important centres of education. Large libraries were formed and manuscripts were copied, and the sacred books were taught with elaborate expositions. Nor were the arts neglected. The Brahmanical sacrifices needed no temples. It was Buddhism which called architecture to the service of religion, and added sculpture and painting to the decorations of the sanctuary. The rising terraces of the temple at Boro-Budur in Java (about A.D. 850), crowded with statues and bas-reliefs which would reach for three miles if placed side by side, rank among the archi-

tectural wonders of the world. The bronze statue of the Buddha at Nara in Japan, more than 50 feet in height, reared in the eighth century, was encompassed by a temple with a front 290 feet in length and a height of 156 feet. At Kamakura, the capital of East Japan eight hundred years ago, with a population of over a million, stood another, 49 feet high; the process of casting began in 1252. Inundations twice destroyed its enclosing sanctuary, but the solemn figure still stands unharmed—

“A statue solid set  
And moulded in colossal calm.”

No other, we are told, gives such an impression of majesty, or so truly symbolises the central idea of Buddhism, the spiritual peace which comes of perfected knowledge and the subjugation of all passions. • “When we speak of Buddhism in Japan,” said the Rev. Isaac Doorman (1896), “we express in a single word all that which is noble, grand, and sublime in Japanese art and architecture, for Buddhism in these islands ever since its inception has been almost identical with the Fine Arts.” Cho Densu (1351-1427) has been designated by another English student the Japanese Fra Angelico.

Behind such manifestations of reverence and

devotion lay moral ideals which in some aspects approached very closely to those of Christianity. The Emperor Constantine, after giving imperial sanction to the Church as the religion of the Empire, still postponed his baptism as a convert till death approached; it was indeed time after the many tragedies which had stained his career to impose upon himself, as he said, rules of life such as God would approve. The Emperor Asoka (about 274-237 B.C.), whose dominions exceeded the range of British India to-day, in commanding Buddhism to his people, expressed his profound sorrow for the devastation and suffering caused by a recent war. In a series of inscriptions carved upon rocks and engraved on pillars, from east to west, from north to south, throughout his realm, he appealed to his subjects from time to time on behalf of mutual toleration and goodwill. In his ninth year he had attacked the kingdom of Kalinga on the eastern coast at the mouth of the river Godāvari. The remembrance of the slaughter filled him with anguish. Five years later he looked back upon his victory with bitter compunction. As many as 150,000 persons had been enslaved or deported, 100,000 had been killed, and many times that number had perished through famine and disease. The loss of even the hundredth or the thousandth

part of those who had been slain or carried captive or done to death would ever be to him, he said, a matter for deep grief. He waged no more war. The taking of life—even of animals—and the mutual hostilities of creeds and sects were alike hateful to him. He desired that by his administration compassion and liberality, truth, honesty, mildness and goodness, the constituents of piety, should all be increased. He himself set the example of his own precepts. He became first a lay disciple, and afterwards a “religious.” From within the Order he commended the Scriptures and their practice to his people. Not unjustly does Bishop Copleston attribute to him “the greatest effort in scale at any rate ever made by man outside of Christianity.” Where, it may be asked, did the Bishop find a greater inside Christianity?

## II

The Judaism which surrounded the cradle of Christianity had been exposed to many influences. The position of Palestine between Egypt and Asia; the settlement of large numbers of people in Mesopotamia after the Captivity; the domination of successive powers—Persian, Greco-Syrian, Roman; the Jewish dispersion along the Mediterranean in Egypt, Asia Minor, Greece,

and Italy—all brought new elements of thought since the days when Amos and Isaiah had proclaimed the great truths of ethical monotheism. Under the stress of the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes devotion had been concentrated on the Temple and the Law. There was the supreme privilege of Israel, the perpetual witness of God's care for his chosen people. In its fulfilment was unfailing delight for the pious soul, meditation upon it was sweet, for it was the gift of Heaven. The Levitical priesthood was in charge of the complicated sacrificial system, and constituted a sacred caste spread through the country. Apart from the temple, however, they had no special functions; many of them were very poor, and the cultivated members of the high-priestly families often looked upon the ignorant with scorn. The daily ritual involved the regular slaughter of animals for burnt offering. In the priests' court near the great altar stood marble tables for laying out the flesh and fat; the dismembered parts were hung upon low columns, and the joints were fastened with rows of hooks and rings. To cleanse the court an ample supply of water was needed, and a mighty laver, resting on twelve lions, was emptied every evening and refilled the next morning by special machinery. The Gospel reader who pictures Jesus and his

disciples around the paschal lamb does not realise what scenes might have taken place that afternoon. The historian Josephus mentions that on one occasion upwards of a quarter of a million lambs were slain at the Passover, and even when allowance is made for serious exaggeration the condition of the Temple must have been well-nigh intolerable. It is noteworthy that beyond the prediction that the Temple itself would fall, Jesus is not credited with any protest against the sacrificial element of the cultus, save indirectly by driving out the money-changers, and the disciples were in daily attendance in the precincts after his death.

The sabbath-worship of the people was of course conducted in the synagogues. There prayers were offered, the Scriptures were read, and teaching followed. No ordained ministry was required. In pious homes the young learned the familiar passages which summed up the national faith, and those who could read the rolls of the five books of Moses or the Prophets might stand up, like Jesus, at the lector's desk. Ever since the fierce attempt of the Syrian overlord, Antiochus Epiphanes, to overthrow Israel's religion, it had been fully realised that its security depended on the loyal observance of God's demands in the Law. To study it, to explain it,

to teach it, was a supreme duty. The function of the Scribe belonged to no caste, it was open to all. The leaders of rival schools of interpretation, such as Shammai and Hillel in the time of Christ, might represent different tendencies of treatment, but they practised the same general methods, they handed on the maxims of their predecessors, they discussed fresh cases of conduct, and laid down new rules. By their side stood the brotherhoods of the Pharisees, who sought to carry out in daily life the ideal demands of the Law as elaborated by the Scribes. These fraternities in like manner received members from various ranks in the community. They recognised the principle of development as the details of application were pushed farther and farther into specific regulations, and they espoused the new doctrine of resurrection after death and judgment to come, which the high-priestly party at Jerusalem, the Sadducees, rejected. The Pharisees were scattered through the country, in their own homes; but there were others who sought to carry still farther the strictest rules of legal purity, and established themselves in separate groups. Known as Essenes they practised an extreme simplicity of life, abstaining both from meat and wine. They had no separate property; they worked in the

fields or in other manual arts ; they bathed twice daily. Each candidate for admission was obliged to serve for three years on probation. On his reception into the Order he took a solemn oath to show piety towards God and observe righteousness towards men, to injure none and to keep faith with all, always to love the truth, to keep his hands from stealing, and his soul from unhallowed gains. Some of their settlements admitted men only ; others allowed women to belong to the community and even sanctioned marriage. There were also occasional figures of still more austere habit, like the Baptist who came to the Jordan bank with his warning cry of impending doom, or the ascetic Banus—under whom Josephus studied—who wore a bark garment like a Hindu mendicant, lived upon herbs, and practised frequent bathing. And coming and going along the great road which led from Egypt into Asia were the caravans of merchants, and the bands of pilgrims to the Temple, and the Roman soldiers, who spoke of distant lands and strange beliefs, and made the Jew cling all the more passionately to his sacred Law and the God who had chosen Israel for his own inheritance.

Very different was the social life of India in the Ganges Valley between Benares and Patna

in which Buddhism arose. The Aryan tribes who had descended many centuries earlier from the north-west, had gradually pushed farther and farther east, and established themselves in supremacy over the dark-skinned peoples whom they found upon the soil. They had built cities and organised states, sometimes under some kind of tribal government, sometimes under kings.\* They had brought with them their ancient hymns in the collection known as the Rig Veda; they had elaborated their ritual; they had gradually evolved a sacred order in charge of their sacrifices. The Brāhmans had become an hereditary priesthood like that of Israel. The whole field of religion was in their keeping. They knew the consecrated texts and the deities to whom they were addressed. They arranged the ceremonies of worship, and controlled all the details of complicated and costly rites. But no sense of divine guidance had led the immigrants forward. No traditions of hallowed intercourse with Deity gathered round mountain or well or tree; no remembrance of danger overcome or victory achieved by help from on high lighted the past and charged the future with promise and hope.

\* See the brilliant sketch by Professor Rhys Davids in his *Early Buddhism* (1908) in Constable's series, "Religions Ancient and Modern."

The seers of old had beheld the venerable poems in the realm of the Deathless above the changes of mortality; they thus constituted a mysterious body of revelation, and their preservation and study became a supreme duty. Elaborate rules were devised to guard them from alteration, as the art of writing had not yet reached India from the West, and the “twice-born” youths of the three upper castes were expected to spend twelve laborious years in studying them. The Brāhmans encompassed the whole of life with religious observance. The ceremonies connected with birth, marriage, and death were in their hands. In the sphere of the family the householder was bound to discharge a fourfold debt—to the Gods by sacrifice; to the ancient Seers by study of the Veda; to the departed Fathers by rearing sons who would continue the rites necessary for their welfare in the world beyond; to their fellow Men by hospitality to the poor—a duty now often discharged by provision for needy students. And around the daily ritual the Brāhmans wove an extraordinary web of mystical ideas. The sacrifices of earth had their counterparts in the skies. The sunrise was the kindling of the heavenly fire, and a vast system of magical connexions was established by which the Brāhmans claimed that their performance kept the

world's order going, and declared themselves to be "human gods."

But their authority was not unquestioned. There might be something after all of more value than sacrifice. A passion for truth, a deep longing to solve the mysteries of existence, led men to break away from the ties of home when family duty had been fulfilled, and seek in the seclusion of the forest or as wandering mendicants opportunities for meditation. A teacher would gather others round him for instruction, travelling slowly from place to place they would meet friends or rivals for quiet discussion or perhaps angry debate. To live upon alms of food or clothing was in no way disgraceful; a grove of trees, or the village rest-house provided for travellers, might afford shelter for the night. Here the problems which have always in some form or another kindled the imagination and occupied human thought were formulated with uncompromising fearlessness. The ancient seers had already begun to speculate on the origin of the universe, the gods, and man. The Wanderers asked whether the world had a beginning in time or was eternal; was it limited in extent or infinite? What was the soul? they enquired; what happened to it after death? There were many answers to such questions. Would it live again,

and if so where, and in what conditions, or would it die with the body? Nay, to face every alternative, would one who had gained the truth both live again and not live again, or neither live again nor not live again! Neither Pharisee nor Sadducee could have conceived such dilemmas. The intellectual atmosphere in which Buddhism arose was unique. Yet the Hebrew poet had prayed that God's twin angels of light and truth might be his guides to lead him to the temple-mount, where in the consecrated idiom of devotion he would "see God's face." The Brāhman, who had no historic sanctuary as a centre of national worship, prayed in more abstract mood: "Lead me from darkness to light, lead me from death to the Deathless."\*

There was yet another aspect of the religious life against which Buddhism reacted. It had long been believed that personal austerities and self-mortification could secure superhuman powers, for example, of vision or locomotion. Piety of an extreme type called for extravagances of suffering. To wear bark dress (like the Jewish Banus), to feed on berries and roots, to eat but once in so many days, to hang head downwards like a bat, to stand upon one leg—these and

\* *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad* i. 3, 27; *cp. S.B.E.* xv., p. 84.

many other self-torturing inventions had the same kind of attraction for certain types of men as the pillar had for Simeon Stylites, with the same result, self-satisfaction and contempt for others. No graver warnings are probably to be found in the whole range of religious literature than the Buddha's calm and penetrating analysis of the manifold dangers of the ascetic's pride.

What was the outlook on the world in these two widely severed modes of thought, Hebrew and Hindu?

### III

The teachers of Israel naturally based their faith upon their Scriptures, and answered their questions primarily out of "the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms." The stately story of creation, in the book designated by its opening words "In the beginning," related the solemn fabrication of the heavens and the earth and the ordered development of the animal world day by day up to man. Then came the sabbath of the Almighty rest. But when that was over what was the relation of God to the universe which he had made? Man might be bidden to commemorate the divine repose by weekly observance, but no such need affected Deity again. Prophet and Psalmist delighted to celebrate his continuous activity. The alternations of night

and day testified to his unceasing energy; when the sun set he summoned each star upon its course by name, and his unfailing might guided its march across the skies. Fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy wind, fulfilled his word. The springs that ran into the valleys were sent forth by him. He provided the young lions' prey, the grass for cattle, and the grain for man. Everywhere his might and wisdom and beneficence wrought out his works of bounty and delight, or in penal doom his will sent blight or famine or the insect pest. Later imagination provided the heavenly King with vast retinues of angels. The Book of Jubiles, shortly before our era, conceived the operations of nature to be carried on by spirits of winds and clouds, thunder and lightning, cold and heat. There were spirits of winter and spring, of summer and autumn, and of all creatures in earth and sky. To these fantasies Jesus makes no allusion, but he rests upon the faith of his people. For him the world is the sphere of the heavenly Father's constant activity. The sun rises on the evil and the good, the rain descends on the unjust as the just, because the great order of the outward scene is the visible manifestation of his perfect will. The sparrow cannot fall to the ground without him; he counts the hairs upon our heads;

the universe and all its wonders of constancy and change are the perpetual product of the living God.

The religious philosophy of India had laid hold of conceptions not wholly dissimilar. The poets of the Rig Veda had seen in earth and sky, in sun and wind, in fire and water, powers and energies of super-mortal grandeur. The world was full of such elemental forces in river and tree, in bird and beast. Might they not be, after all, not separate and diverse but mysteriously related, or even essentially one, each with each? Just as there was a spirit or soul or self in man, might there not be a Spirit or Soul or Self pervading the whole world with creative might? By the time of the Buddha the guesses and speculations of many generations had settled in popular religion on the majestic figure of Brahmā, who is again and again described in these solemn terms—"The Great Brahmā, the Conqueror, the Unconquered, the All-seeing, the Disposer, the Lord, the Maker, the Creator, Chief of all, Appointing to each his place, the Ancient of Days, Father of all that are and are to be."\* Beneath his sovereignty were ranged many of the deities of the sacred hymns, somewhat like the great angels of later Hebrew piety—Michael,

\* Cp. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha* i., pp. 31, 281; iii., p. 26.

Gabriel, and the rest. And beyond these were multitudes of shining *devas*, dwelling in light as one heaven rose above another. Philosophy, however, sought to find the unity of the whole in the mysterious Self that constituted the ultimate ground of all existence. Within all the objects and changes of our common experience, within the heart of man, smaller than the small and yet greater than the great, all-pervading and all-transcending, the inward eye discerned the Absolute and Eternal. Nothing could be said of It except that It was. It had no shape or hue, it could not be contained in anything. It was neither masculine nor feminine; it was designated without gender, impersonally, Brahma. Yet by manifestation or development or modification it became the active Brahmā, who brought the world and all its contents into being, and so disposed its scenes and objects, its agencies and occupants, that everyone throughout the mighty realm from heaven to hell always and everywhere exactly got his due.

The sovereignty of God, however, in Jewish thought had its grave limitations. Under influences which had streamed in upon it from various sources—Mesopotamian, Persian, and possibly Greek—the view of the world which the early Church inherited was by no means so simple as that which is presented in the Gospels.

The Apostle Paul, indeed, taught that all things were out of God, through him, and unto him. He was the source from which all came, the energy by which all existed, the goal to which all moved. But there were strange orders of beings constantly engaged in frustrating his will. Above the earth, according to a cosmographic scheme widely spread through the East, rose seven heavens. • In the third the heavenly Paradise was planted, and there Paul believed himself to have been caught up (2 Cor. xii. 2-4); there Enoch had seen three hundred angels who kept the garden, and with blessed singing served the Lord every day; and there the apostle heard unspeakable words. In the radiance of the seventh heaven Enoch beheld the “thrones and dominions and principalities and powers” enumerated by Paul (Col. i. 16).\* But Paul reckoned these “principalities and powers” with the “world-rulers of this darkness,” the spiritual forces of wickedness who wrought their mischief from their seats in “the heavenlies” (Eph. vi. 12), and were concerned in bringing Jesus to the cross (1 Cor. ii. 8). Between heaven and earth the prince of the power of the air was at work among the sons of disobedience (Eph. ii. 2);

\* *The Secrets of Enoch* viii. 1-8; xx. 1 (Morfill and Charles).

and a later writer (in the *Ascension of Isaiah*, x.) describes the descent of the Lord Christ through the successive heavens, assuming the form of the angels in each to escape recognition, till he reaches the firmament in which the ruler of this world has his dwelling among angels envying and fighting, plundering and doing violence to one another. There are no such details in the first three Gospels. But in the view of Jesus over against the Rule of God is the Rule of the Adversary, the Sātān (Matt. xii. 26 *ff.*). Out of the abyss swarm hosts of spirits, emissaries of evil, to inflict disease on helpless sufferers. Beneath the earth is the dread region of Gehenna where the “cursed” are condemned to “æonian” fire in the society of the devil and his angels. How often have devout and thoughtful Christians vainly sought to reconcile this awful doom with Jesus’ own teaching concerning the Father who is in heaven, or the grand vision of Paul that when the hostile powers of evil are finally subdued, and death itself is dead, God shall be all in all\* (1 Cor. xv. 24-28).

\* How much of the eschatological language ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels was really part of his own teaching must remain uncertain; but this doctrine has certainly been part of orthodox Christian teaching until recently.

The Buddhist picture of the universe was on a scale far vaster in extent, for imagination ranged boldly through immense distances of space and ages of time. Four great continents lay around the base of a gigantic central mountain named Mēru. The land of the Hindus was on the south. On the summit was the city of the thirty-three gods of the ancient hymns. The Brāhman poets delighted to describe it under the sovereignty of the great god Indra. They sang of its jewelled walls and wondrous fruit-trees, like those of the new Jerusalem in the Christian Apocalypse. There the sun did not scorch, cold and weariness were unknown, and grief and despondency, anger and covetousness, could never enter. The Brāhmans pictured the supreme God Brahmā in a wondrous palace far, far above this celestial city. No walls enclosed it, no pillars supported it. It had no need of sun or moon to lighten it, self-luminous, it shed its radiance everywhere. Only the most holy could enjoy its blessedness. Round the Most High were his mind-born sons, and there also were mysterious personations of Mind, Space, Knowledge, Air, Heat, Water, Earth, all causes and orders of creation, a mighty multitude, divine, human, and animal, engaged in ceaseless worship. Buddhist piety in like manner placed Brahmā's

heaven at the summit of the world. Its numerous tiers, and the celestial beings who occupied them, rose rank above rank, and culminated in four realms occupied by beings without form, simple radiances like the spirits in Dante's *Paradiso*, nourished on joy. And among the mansions in which intervening grades were placed was the heaven of Māra, lord of sin and death, tempter to evil, with his associate powers. From these upper worlds Indra or Māra or Brahmā himself might come down to take part in the affairs of men; and from the Heaven of Delight the future Buddha descended when the time was ripe to be born as Gotāma from the womb of the lady Māyā, wife of Suddhodana, of the city of Kapilavastu. Beneath the earth were grim regions of gloom and torment. In one of them, as Buddhist folklore told, dwelt Yama, the dread lord of hell. Hideous demons dragged the sinner before him for sentence, and then carried him off for punishment. But not for ever. For the worst offender there was at last an end of retribution, and it might be his turn to ascend above the sky. Such was the complex of regions constituting a world-system, and of these early Buddhism reckoned no less than ten thousand. What was it that regulated the lots of the various inhabitants of these scenes of bliss and woe? What power

assigned them their place and condition on earth, in hell, or heaven?

The answer to such questions lies in the famous doctrine of *Karma*, or the Law of the Deed.\*

When one generation after another passed away whither did they go? The seers of the ancient hymns sang of their ascent from the funeral pyre on the wings of flame to the bright land above the sky where they were received into the fellowship of the heavenly Powers. For evildoers a different lot was reserved; they were consigned to a deep pit in the dark. As ceremonial developed and speculation advanced, new lines of thought appear in the literature which dealt with the application of the Vedic texts in sacrifice. Devotions to particular deities were supposed to entitle the worshippers to some kind of union with them in the heavenly life. There the pious would be born in bodies of some super-earthly stuff. They would dwell in the same world as their god; they would in some mysterious fashion share his very life or soul. By proper offerings the believer had laid up treasure in heaven. The service of this life was entitled to corresponding reward in the next; he could look forward with confidence to a welcome into bliss.

\* *Karma*, from a verb meaning "to do" or "make," denotes what is done, an action or deed.

Was it not said of old "A man is born into the world that he has made"?\* It was a profound principle capable of application in other directions beside ritual.

By degrees ethical demands became clearer. Valuation in terms of sacrifice might easily be crossed by valuation in terms of conduct. "In yonder world," it was said, "they place him in the balance, and whichever of the two shall outweigh the other, that he shall follow, whether it be good or evil." It was the maxim of the early law books that "the deed does not perish,"† and the deed might be of many kinds. In the sphere of worship it meant offerings, in the field of social life it meant behaviour, and the character of which behaviour was the outcome. A strange legend told how Bhrigu, the son of the great heaven-god Varuna, was sent on a journey through the worlds. Going east he saw men hewing off the limbs of others. "Horrible," he said. They answered, "Thus in deed these men dealt with us in yonder world, and so we deal with them in return." It was the savage principle of tit-for-tat. And Bhrigu went farther and saw other penalties, and wound up with a vision of a black man with yellow eyes and a

\* Cp. *S.B.E.* xli., p. 181.

† *Ibid.*, ii., p. 271.

judge's staff in his hand, and by his side two women, one beautiful, one foul, the embodiments of good and evil deeds. Here are the beginnings of judgment and retribution.

But another line of thought raised new enquiries. From early days the changes in the outward scene had been duly observed and their successions noted. Their order and regularity from day to day and year to year, their seasonal variations, seed-time and harvest, had been brought under the general conception of Law, they belonged to the *Rita*, the course or path of Nature. Even the gods had been born in its lap. In the varieties of human experience the most certain sequence was that of birth and death. When the Dawn-maiden came forth from the darkness in the freshness of her youth the poets said she was reborn. Morning followed night, and night morning. The regular cycles of appearance, disappearance, reappearance could be expressed in terms of birth, death, re-birth, and re-death. It was a poetic way of saying that whatever has a beginning in time must have an end. Production involved dissolution at last. Origin might be followed by growth, but maturity must yield at last to decay. Was this true of life in the next world as well as in this? Would bliss in heaven have its close? And if it did not last

what would happen? Men flung out various hopes and guesses after means and devices for escaping re-death, and a vision arose of blessedness in fellowship with Brahmā which should abide for ever. But if that were not reached, and death claimed its own, what would befall? What would determine the duration of the next life, and what would settle the place and condition and length of the next life after that?

A costly sacrifice was once celebrated by Janaka, the renowned King of the Videhas. It was attended by a crowd of Brāhmans from near and far. Splendid gifts were distributed. A thousand cows were set apart in an enclosure, and ten gold pieces were fastened to each pair of horns. "Venerable Brāhmans," said the King, "let him who is wisest among you drive away these cows." No one was bold enough to claim them, till a famous teacher named Yājñavalkya said to one of his disciples, "Drive them away, my dear." A fire of questions followed from his rivals, and at last one asked, "When the voice of a dead man goes into the fire, his breath into the wind, his eye into the sun, his mind into the moon, his hearing into the quarters of heaven, his body into the earth, his self (or soul) into space . . . what then becomes of this person?" "Take my hand, my friend," said Yājñavalkya,

“we two alone shall know of this. This is not for us two to discuss in public.” The two went away and argued. What they said was *Karma*. What they praised was *Karma*. “Verily one becomes good by good *Karma*, bad by bad *Karma*.” And after that the questioner held his peace.\*

Here is the beginning of the doctrine of the Deed. It is connected with the name of the greatest thinker of early Indian antiquity. How long it took to win acceptance we do not know. Centuries must have been needed to work out all its applications. It ultimately supplied the form in which every problem of human life here and hereafter was set and answered. It became the fundamental axiom of existence, the regulative principle of the universe. The whole field of time and space was shaped to match, and the worlds and their succession were arranged on a scale suited to its demands. Buddhism might question everything else, but it would allow no tampering with the reality of *Karma*. How it operated might be unexplained, but its constant action must be recognised. The sects which challenged it in Gotama’s day could not hold their own. The materialist might deny it, but the Indian mind clung to it instinctively as the

\* *S.B.E.* xv., p. 127.

inviolable support of the essential justice regulating human life. It provided an explanation of all the diversities of the common lot. The varieties of condition for animal, man, demon, ghost, or god, all found their cause. If a man is born good hereafter by good Karma, and evil by evil, that which determines his position in the future may equally well have brought about his circumstances in the present. His social rank as prince or slave, the grace or deformity of his person, the vicissitudes of good fortune or loss, of sickness or accident or bereavement, with all the abilities and dispositions, the tempers and infirmities, the energies and affections, that make up his inner personality—these are the inevitable result of his past. Far, far back in distant ages where no beginning could be conceived, he somehow started making himself. Through innumerable lives whether in heaven, on earth, or in hell, he has been subject to the inviolable law that by every moment's action in thought, word, or deed, he strengthens or weakens the forces of good or evil within and around him. The animated world is incorporated in a universal moral order. This vast variety of beings, in constant transit from one scene to another between the extremes of hell and heaven, all shared a common life, under a common

sovereignty, invisible, impersonal, but all-embracing. Within its sway were they, then, all separate atoms? Had they no ties of union with each other? Such questions were not asked at first. The Buddha was content to insist on the certainty of moral consequences for each thought and word and deed. Among the five orders from the demon to the angel every one must die and be re-born for his own iniquity or his own virtue. The past could not be cancelled, nor responsibility evaded. The whole of existence is ruled by everlasting Right.

#### IV

The philosophic thinkers whose speculations had begun to find a place in the canon of the Vedic hymns had early recognised a distinction between that which *is*, permanent, enduring, eternal, and that which only passes, as it were, across the scene, comes into view, and passes out again. In contrast with that which did not change and was always there, the objects which began to be, which grew and in due time decayed, seemed to have no lasting hold on *being*, they were intrinsically unreal and would disappear. The day died down in darkness and was re-born in dawn. Human life, in like manner, ended with old age and death, and the Law of the Deed

demanded that it should be renewed elsewhere in suffering or felicity to requite its past. The vicissitudes of the seasons, the courses of the years, all suggested ideas of change and periodicity. Might not this principle affect a wider range of existence than that of the dwellers upon earth? Might not the visible world be as little steadfast as man himself? Stimulated, perhaps, by vague suggestions derived from Babylonian cosmology, the recognition of a principle of change found its way into Indian thought, and time, which the early thinkers counted only by years, came to be reckoned by ages. Each such age had a limited duration. As it had begun, so in due course it would end, and Time was the great Ender. The universe was subject to a perpetual rhythm of origin, continuance, and dissolution. After a period of apparent stability its destruction would set in, and after another period of darkness and silence the unexhausted potencies of good and evil would demand their opportunities of fulfilment. A fresh universe provided with fitting arrangements for bliss and torment and all the intermediate varieties of moral product would come into being, and deity, man, animal, ghost, or demon, would work out the next stage of their history under the Law of the Deed. This scheme of world-rhythm first

appears in Indian literature as the background of life in the early Buddhist texts. The agency of destruction might be water or fire. Hindu tradition had already its story of the Deluge, remotely allied with that of Mesopotamia. The next destruction would be by fire, when seven suns rising in succession would consume the four continents and their great oceans, Mount Mēru itself, the hells below, and the heavens above.\* Over the whole sphere of existence there thus lay a constant doom. Across earth and sky was written the stern law of impermanence. Those who recognised the great Brahmā as the Eternal might train themselves to enter into fellowship with him. But the Buddha denied his absolute existence. Like all other beings he too was involved in the action of the Law of the Deed; glorious he might be in his lofty sphere, but he was no more everlasting than the rest. The changes might be slow, but they never ceased. What view of life was possible in such a world?

Nothing endured. Over the new-born child there hung, near or afar, the certainty of death, with all the dangers of sickness and the feeble-

\* The application, of course, is Indian, but the doctrine of world-conflagration was probably Babylonian, and echoes of it may be found in both the Bible and Greek thought.

ness and aches of age. The whole of life seemed to be begun and ended in pain. It was full of wants which could not be satisfied, and of troubles which could not be escaped. Hopes were disappointed and expectations baffled; the memories of wrong were bitter; the wounds of bereavement left a lasting smart. Legend told how the young noble had learned the melancholy lesson of the transitoriness of all human satisfactions. Driving out one day from his palace he saw for the first time the trembling figure of a man in extreme old age. Another day he noticed a poor sufferer stricken with loathsome disease. Then it was a corpse borne on the bier to the cremation-ground. These were divinely arranged to compel him to realise the impermanence of life and its pleasures. A fourth warning was sent in the form of a mendicant ascetic who had gone forth from the ties of family, abandoning the delights of the world, and in the conquest of passion and the taming of all the cravings of sense had at last found peace. The beauty of earth and sky would decay; the joys of love would pall; rightly apprehended the whole sphere of existence was full of misery. Let a man think of all the impurities of his body, and who would wish to be entangled in such a mass of corruption? Who would not thankfully seek

a way of escape when he realised that the tears shed in the agelong road of transmigration exceeded the waters of the Four Great Oceans!

But if all modes of being were subject to beginning and ending, what became of the Brāhmans' doctrine of an "eternal soul"? Gotama analysed the constituents of a human person and could not find one anywhere. There was the body with its powers of movement and its organs of sense. There were the sensations which streamed in through them, and the perceptions of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, by which he had commerce with the external world. Beyond these were all kinds of aptitudes, tempers, abilities, dispositions, resulting from the past, providing an inheritance for good or ill from previous lives, and constituting a stock of character with which to start at a fresh birth. And, summing them all up, was consciousness, including, it would seem, the whole group of mental activities, from the most concrete elements of feeling to the most abstract processes of reason or meditation. But in none of these items could Gotama find the equivalent of a soul which could pass at death from one grade of being to another, to rejoice in heaven or to suffer in hell. The inner life of any human person was only a succession of thoughts, desires, affections, passions;

and when the corporeal bond which held them together fell away in death, the union of the person disappeared. His life had really only lasted from moment to moment like a chariot wheel just touching the ground at successive points of its circumference. The world which he knew only through eye and ear came to an end for him when eye and ear could see and hear no more; there was no permanent reality outside him, and neither was there any permanent reality within. So, at least, in spite of many difficulties, the greatest disciple of Gotama in the Pali tradition, Buddhaghosa, understood the Teacher. "With whom are you angry?" he asked. "Are you angry with the Venerable N. N.'s body, his sensations, his perceptions," and so forth? "For a person who has made the above analysis," he concludes, "there is no hold for anger any more than there is for a grain of mustard-seed on the point of an awl, or for a painting in the sky."\* .

Yet if there was no Self to leave the body at death to be re-born elsewhere, what became of the whole process of transmigration? To what purpose could the Teacher announce, when one

\* The reader will find some of the conflicting statements in the early Buddhist texts discussed in my volume on *Theism in Medieval India* (1921), p. 20 ff.

or other of the disciples died, what was his destiny in another world? That was the mystery of the Law of the Deed. With the utmost tenacity Gotama held fast to the moral order. It was the foundation of his whole view of life. Death could not frustrate its operation. Consciousness might cease, the eyes might close for ever, the body might swiftly decay. But out of the years just ended and the thoughts just stilled came unseen potencies which begot a new person, psychologically if not physically continuous with the deceased, ready to suffer or enjoy what his predecessor had prepared for him by his behaviour. Here was indeed a mystery, and its process remained unexplained. Later thinkers endeavoured to establish the links between the antecedent and the consequent, but to the Buddha only was the secret known. His perfect knowledge enabled him to tell the past history of each, and proclaim the issue of death; and as he looked out upon the world he saw its multitudes in all stages of their long travel over that ocean which was never still. And the disciple's holiness might help him to retrace some of his own previous births, and recognise their moral continuity.

Would the voyage go on for ever? Was there no port in which the storm-tossed might take

shelter, no haven in which they might be secure? The Buddha believed that he had found a way across, and he offered to show it to those who would follow him. But it depended on their own efforts, they must be their own lamps, their own refuge. He would himself pass away with all the roots of existence cut off; *Karma* would have upon him no more power. Whether he would live again or not he would not say, the question was not apposite; there were deeps which could not be fathomed for the man who had attained the truth. But the believer need not look out from a life steeped in misery for help from Brahmā. The rejection of enduring ontological realities involved the denial of God. The interminable succession of world-ages had no beginning, no purpose, no guide save *Karma*, and no end. There was no help in a Power which could pitilessly expose his creatures to such woes. With fierce anger did an early poet fling his charges against the Creator of popular theology :

" He who has eyes can see the sickening sight;  
Why does not Brahmā set his creatures right?

If his wise power no limits can restrain,  
Why is his hand so rarely spread to bless?

Why are his creatures all condemned to pain?  
Why does he not to all give happiness?

Why do fraud, lies, and ignorance prevail?  
 Why triumphs falsehood—truth and justice fail?  
 I count your Brahmā one th' unjust among,  
 Who made a world in which to shelter wrong."\*

If there were really an almighty God, it was assumed that all power must be lodged in him. Man was simply the instrument of his will. All human actions had their cause in him. When the saint and the criminal were alike the product of his agency, the distinction between good and evil disappeared, virtue deserved no reverence and vice no reprobation. If the believer owed his faith to him, he also in the sceptic denied his own existence. And what was the meaning of worship, if he was the real author of the hymns sung in his praise, and in the person of the priest offered himself as sacrificial victim to himself? To a God who was the author alike of all suffering and all sin, no one could pay the homage of adoring devotion or of lowly love.

## V

In spite of such an indictment Buddhist philosophy was not a real pessimism. If existence as Gotama saw it was "illth,"† there was a way

\* *The Jātaka*, tr. Cowell and Rouse, vol. vi., p. 109 *ff.*

† Ruskin's counterpart to "wealth."

out. Beyond the world of the born, the produced, the compounded, full of beginnings and ends, of origins and dissolutions, lay a region invisible, indefinable, where death entered no more. The path thither lay through the overcoming of ignorance by knowledge, of passion by self-control, of perversity by steadfastness, of hatred by love. What it would be like no words could tell, but it was the Buddha's business to show how it could be reached. And the mysterious organisation of the universe was such that every right effort was sure of its due effect. No chance, no caprice, no evil fate, could frustrate the believer's progress from outside; nor when he had reached a certain stage of moral stability could any failure from within throw him back, or prevent him from reaching the goal. But in the Buddha's teaching everything depended on the disciple's individual exertion. The succession of the ages, the cosmic rhythm of creation and destruction when Brahmā, as the poets sang, awoke or relapsed into slumber, bore within it no seed of purpose from eternity. No divine power watched over it to mature it or guard it from collapse. It was only a kind of infinite game, a divine sport which offered, indeed, great opportunities, but never came to a definite conclusion. Early Buddhism was still

less able to provide such a goal. But the passion of sympathy which inspired Gotama, and led him to dedicate his life to rescuing his countrymen from ignorance and sin, so animated his followers that they came at last to regard the person of the Teacher in whom they first of all saw an "unsurpassed guide to erring mortals," as a manifestation of the Infinite and Eternal, and found in the world-process the promise of universal salvation.

Over against primitive Buddhism stands primitive Christianity. The fountain-head of the great stream which in these last four centuries has flowed round the world, lies in the few brief years when Jesus of Nazareth trod the Galilean hills. Unlike the son of Suddhodana, born and reared in luxury, the son of Joseph belongs to an artisan's family and is brought up to a trade. Like Gotama he receives the education of his class, but as he begins to observe, to feel, to think for himself, he does not reject the faith of the past to strike out new paths, he meditates on the teachings of the Scriptures, conforms to the worship of his people, and is not affronted by the ritual slaughter of the Temple. He is no philosopher, framing a new theory of existence; no psychologist analysing the springs of human conduct. No sudden conviction of the worth-

lessness of a young man's pleasures has sent him from wife and child to the professors of mystical knowledge, or, in disappointment at their futility, has driven him to the most strenuous self-mortification. He has helped to bring up a large number of younger brothers and sisters; he knows the strength and joy of family union; the memory of his father enriches his favourite name for God. He watches the varied panorama of the life around, the life of the market and the lake, the cornfield, the vineyard, and the pasture; he notes the professions of self-satisfied piety, and the humility of sincere repentance; he is filled with anger at the scorn of the legally righteous for the social outcast; he feels a growing impulse to go forth and help the sinner. That is not to be achieved by withdrawal from the world among the Essenes by the Dead Sea, or under the teaching of a bark-clad ascetic like Banus. There are grievous wrongs that must be righted, and oppressions that must be overthrown. Meanwhile he learns the secret of inward harmony with God as he spends long nights upon the hills in prayer, and waits for a way to open and a clear call to fulfil.

Suddenly a mighty voice rings through the land and reaches the upward vale of Nazareth. It comes from the banks of the Jordan, "Repent :

for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” A prophet is in the field with fiery warning of the Coming Wrath, and a summons to baptism for the remission of sins. Here is a great religious and social crisis, shaking all classes of the people with new hopes and fears. Unlike the Indian Sage who worked out his problem in solitude and silence, Jesus realises the summons in the midst of the crowds who hang on the Baptist’s burning words, and he goes down with the stricken and penitent into the stream as they dedicate themselves to answer the demand for inward change of heart and life. It is the moment for a great resolve; and when John is hurried off to the prison at Machærus overlooking the Dead Sea, he returns to Galilee with the same proclamation, “Repent: for the kingdom of God is at hand.”

What did the “Rule of God” really mean? Doubtless, many different things to many different minds. In divers lands political analogy had supplied the highest conception of God. Isaiah, looking back on the moment when he had received the terrible message to his countrymen, told how he had “seen the King, Yahweh of hosts.” There was a majestic sovereignty over Nature, in virtue of which the stars answered to the summons night by night, and all the agencies of earth and sea and air obeyed its rule.

There was a sovereignty over man, extending over the kingdoms of the world. And there was a sovereignty over the angel powers in their various ranks, which might tolerate for a while the Rule of the Adversary, but would in its own time bring all oppositions to naught. For the Rule of God united absolute justice with absolute beneficence; had not the Psalmist seen the two-fold principle of the divine government when he sang “Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work”? To this faith history, prophecy, and law all bore witness. From the first day of creation a mysterious continuity had knit each generation to its past. In Israel God had chosen a people for himself, and they could count all the years back to the hour when first the morning stars had sung for joy. A wondrous thread of purpose ran through the whole. More and more clear was it, as prophetic vision embraced nations once estranged in bitter strife, that Israel was the destined teacher of religion to the world. And later still, with the passionate demand that opportunity must be given to it to fulfil this function, came also the profound conviction in minds of rare elevation and humility that if Israel failed in its discharge it must itself be judged.

Out of such thoughts rose the belief that a day

would come when God would visibly take his power and reign. "In the beginning" the heavens and the earth had sprung into being at the Creator's word. The animals and man had been responsive to his will. Must there not be an end to match? Could the divine intent be for ever frustrated? The Indian Sage might look back over age after age in the past and forward to age after age in the future, confident only that their endless succession was regulated by a moral order, though their procession led to nothing. Jewish Apocalyptic had also its conception of world-ages, but it was content with two, an "age that now is" and an "age that is to come." The approach of the second would be marked by the "birth-pains" of the new order, social conflicts, physical calamities, famines, plagues, earthquakes, wars, eclipses, convulsions, and strange signs in the sky. And then the Son of Man should arrive from heaven with a retinue of angels and a trumpet blast; the great judgment of the living and the risen dead should begin, and the "Coming Age" of blessedness would be established.

Christianity became the heir of these hopes, and they pervade the writings of its early teachers. The first three Gospels with varying degrees of detail unite in attributing to Jesus the

prediction of the advent of the Son of Man in the lifetime of his hearers. The language is too explicit to be evaded :

“ Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”

In the faith generated by such expectations the Apostle Paul wrote to his converts at Thessalonica to relieve their concern for those who died before Jesus appeared :

“ This we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

Expectation could not be more precise. The object of the Lord’s descent is no less clearly stated. It is to “render vengeance to them that know not God,” or in more general terms, “to judge men’s secrets by Jesus Christ.” “For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the

things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. v. 10). Believers, however, will have their share in the judgment itself; "Know ye not," he asks the Corinthians, "that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. vi. 3), and on that plea warns them against litigation among themselves. This would be one of the privileges, apparently, of "reigning with Christ." Had not Jesus himself promised the twelve apostles that they should sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 30)? Critical opinions may legitimately differ about the historic value of specific utterances attributed to the Teacher by the Gospel records. But by appealing to the "word of the Lord" as the sanction of his forecast the Apostle Paul carries back his hope to the first days when memory was gathering up its impressions of the Master's sayings. The warnings against sloth, the urgency for watchfulness, the images of unexpectedness, the sudden lightning-flash, the stealthy entry of the thief in the night, all point in one direction—the end is at hand. This was what drove the early preachers forth over land and sea, heedless of obstacles, perils of hunger and cold, of robbers and nakedness, of false brethren, of persecutions, that all might have a chance to hear the word of salvation.

For this the seer of Patmos waited, “Behold, I come quickly.” The Gospel declarations remained, but Jesus came not. They lie upon our printed page, but their significance has vanished as completely as the demons of disease, and heaven and earth are still where they were. An immense illusion has disappeared under manifold influences of history, cosmology, and other sciences which unite to tell the story of the long ascent of man. •We reckon time now by periods and space by star-distances that can match those of India. What is the meaning for us under such changed conditions of early Christian hope? In contrast with its profound transmutation in the Fourth Gospel into a perpetual moral test, the Church still sings “We believe that thou shalt come to be our judge,” and, to keep in line with Paul, the Creed expressly includes both “quick and dead.” Such words can have but one meaning. They describe a real Person descending from the sky to deal with a living population on the earth, as well as with the generations that are gone. From this crude form of that “far off divine event” which shall inaugurate the Rule of God, it must be admitted that the modern mind revolts. The scholar does not even hesitate to say that “to such an extent are the Synoptic Gospels Jewish books, occupied with problems

belonging originally to first-century Judaism, that it makes large parts of them difficult to use as books of universal religion.”\*

Yet when we compare the Jewish doctrine of the Two Ages, and the approaching end† with the endlessness of the Indian series, we can see in it the expression of a sublime idea which lies at the very heart of our religion. The whole of human history leads up to the great announcement “the Rule of God is coming.” The purpose, conceived in mystery before the foundation of the world, is to be fulfilled at last. All that was implied in the creation of man, in his spread over the earth, in the call of Abraham, in the discipline of the chosen people, in the revelation of the Law, and the visions of the Prophets—all this long preparation will reach its goal and disclose its meaning. The limits of a narrow nationalism shall be broken down, and Gentile and Jew, joint members of humanity, shall assemble at the table of the kingdom together. We have ceased to think in these figures. The earth is no longer the centre of the universe. What the world-purpose is for the whole we cannot tell. But

\* Professor F. C. Burkitt, *The Earliest Sources of the Life of Jesus* (1910), p. 30.

† Not even the world-conflagration is wanting; cp. 2 Pet. iii. 10.

within our own sphere we are not left altogether in the dark. When Jesus bade his disciples pray for the coming of the Rule, he told them where to find it and how to recognise it, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” In other words, we are, as the Apostle Paul said of himself, God’s fellow-workers. We are the agents of his purpose for us. The whole of our life is a partnership in an existence immeasurably wider than our own. Each step that bears us forward on the ground is taken with the aid of the same power that drives our globe around the sun. We belong to a vast system of relations through which God pours his energy in myriad ways, and gives us a share in determining the direction in which it shall be applied. From the dim dawn of life beneath the sea to the loftiest products of the human spirit in literature, art, science, law, religion, there runs a mighty thread of spiritual development, so that all our experience is folded in the promise of a great hope. The eye of the ape looks out on the same scene as that of man; he has a tongue, but cannot speak. Instinct may teach him how to propagate his kind and protect his young, but there are no morals in the forest, and the realm of the ideal is for ever closed. But man finds himself open on one side of his nature to the deeps of being. In that

world of "the unborn, the unoriginated, the uncompounded" which the Indian Sage recognised but of which he would tell nothing, the Christian discerns a Living Mind, Author of beauty and good, of life and joy, to whom his Teacher gave the name of Heavenly Father. And this august Being summons us to share in his perpetual creation. We are bidden to engage in the making of righteousness which but for us would not come into being. Each baser temper turned to sweetness, each meaner impulse mastered, each low habit vanquished, each humbling weakness overcome, counts for something in the world of spirit. It is something done, and the deed lasts; it enters into the fabric of character; it puts us in relation with all the mighty sum of achieved good since man first learned to know it from evil; and it enrolls us in the great company of the servants of the Rule.

Will this service end? We cannot tell. The Buddha saw clearly that the moral product of one life would be carried on into another. From a very different point of view Jesus teaches the same lesson. Life is a trust, and its faithful discharge here opens the way to larger opportunity hereafter. Faith in God and our eternal union with him, are not two doctrines of our creed but one, said another Indian teacher.

Whoever has realised, however imperfectly, the overwhelming significance of such union with God that we can think his thoughts after him, share his designs, and do his will, learns in such high moments that he is even now in touch with the Eternal, and believes in consequence that there is that in him which cannot die. And if in himself, why then in all. Who is he that he should claim an everlasting superiority over the worst or meanest of his kind? And so he will look over the brutal, the lustful, the false, the cruel, and all the grievous host of evildoers, humbly recognising that mysterious and awful fact of fellowship with them as well as with the Eternal. He will recall the tale of his own efforts, and all the vicissitudes of defeat and victory, and he will say as he sits in his chamber of imagery amid memories of penitence and hope, "This was my training for my Father's service. Thus and thus has he humbled me, thus and thus has he exalted me. Has he not yet something for me to accomplish; shall I not commit my spirit to him without fear?" When Jesus with a glorious confidence in human nature called the fisherman and the shepherd, the craftsman and the farmer, and the wife and mother in the home, to be perfect as their heavenly Father was perfect, did he not im-

plicitly postulate an immortality in which to do it?

The revelation of the Rule of God instead of ending "the age that now is" has indefinitely prolonged it. And it has not altered its external conditions. The world is as full of the pains of sickness, the decrepitude of age and the sorrows of death, as it was when the son of Suddhodana first learned of them on his pleasure-drives. The tender mercies of the wicked are still cruel, the oppositions of justice grievous, the wounds of love bitter. And we have not the insight claimed by the Buddha to relate each smart to some incident of wrong in a distant life. Christianity can never explain suffering. In the mingled web of pain and joy which is woven into every lot, it can lay no hand upon the ill and say "This is thy desert." Under the Rule of God it has another word, "This is thy service." In the great warfare with evil the good soldier of Jesus Christ must learn to endure hardness, without complaint in any case, and, better, blithely if he can. He is called to courage, and he finds that others are marching round him steadfastly. In the remembrance of the long roll of the heroes and the saints he too can face agony and not quail. The victories of the past bear up his steps. He learns from Jesus the sublime mystery of the

power that comes from complete self-surrender to the Father's will. St. Paul teaches him how to take pleasure in distresses so that he can do all things through him who strengthens him. In ineffable moments he recognises the heavenly Presence with him, understanding his anguish and supporting his infirmity. He hears with humble comprehension the prayer of St. Francis, "Lord, that I may suffer most"; and from the upper spheres there comes the uplifting song, like a silver chime beneath the stars, *In la sua volontade è nostra pace*—"In his will is our peace."



BUDDHISM and Christianity have each created immense organisations which have carried their teaching over vast areas and provided ideals of life for hundreds of millions of people through successive generations. Gotama, on achieving his eager quest for a solution of the riddle of life, proceeded like other teachers round him, to form a community of disciples to propagate his discovery. There were as yet no written books; new ideas could only be spread by speech from place to place. For five and forty years, tradition told, he wandered to and fro, winning converts from the prince and the Brāhman to the slave, and impressing upon his Order the duty of continually preaching the saving truth. In this spirit a long train of followers gradually carried their Master's message east and west and north and south, till not India only but all Central and Eastern Asia and the islands of the deep had heard the way of Deliverance.

Very different was the actual origin of the Christian Church. Jesus also gathered disciples around him, and sent them forth to preach. He

made no breach with the religion of his people. He had not come, he said, to destroy but to fulfil the Law and the Prophets. What was needed was not a new organisation but a new spirit. The groups among whom he sowed the Word took no vows and obeyed no discipline. In the impassioned expectation of the coming of the Son of Man to hold the great Judgment and inaugurate the Rule of God in the lifetime of his followers, the creation of a visible body equipped with sacraments and priesthood for thousands of years, and a deposit of truth from which a complicated theology could be evolved, must have been impossible.\* The primitive believers, waiting at Jerusalem for Jesus to reappear from the skies as they had seen him ascend (Acts i. 11), formed a sect within Judaism. But the missionary energy which animated the first summons to Peter and Andrew to "become fishers of men," began to work in the disciples once convinced after the catastrophe of the Cross that their Master still lived. Confronted before long with the searching question of the admission of non-Jews to the privileges of the kingdom without the obligations of the Law, the Gospel-preachers boldly carried the new faith into Europe amid Greek culture

\* I am obliged here to assume the results of critical study on the language attributed to Jesus in Matt. xvi. 18, and xviii. 17.

and Roman institutions. Before the eyes of Paul there rose the wonderful vision of a divine mystery long hid but at last revealed. Gentile and Jew were no longer sundered. Partition walls were broken down, and all alike were fellow-heirs of the unsearchable riches of Christ. Within the Church apostles and prophets, pastors and teachers, were all limbs of a common organism, united by one Spirit. The devout Buddhist recognised the body of his Master in the Teaching; the Christian disciple saw the body of the Christ in the Church.

What, then, was the purport of the Teaching committed by the Buddha to his Order?

## I

When Gotama left wife and child to find out the meaning of existence, he went to one of the eminent ascetics of the day who had gathered followers around him for instruction in a special discipline culminating in a peculiar kind of inward rapture. Unsatisfied, however, and restless at heart, he by-and-by left him for another professor who expounded a rapture of a higher sort. In this also he found no peace. Wandering on he crossed the Ganges, and after passing to and fro in the kingdom of Magadha amid meadows and villages he paused in the neighbourhood of the forest on the bank of a small

river (now called Phalgu). There he practised the severest self-mortification to obtain absolute control over body and mind, and eradicate all the desires of the flesh and the passions of the heart. He ate grass and seeds, he limited himself to one grain of rice a day. His austerities excited the admiration of five ascetics in the neighbourhood who waited for him to declare the secret of attainment. One day his exhausted frame could bear no more, and he fell fainting to the ground. It was a warning that emaciation was not the path to knowledge. He took some food, and the five observers, disgusted at his failure, went away. How time passed before he reached his goal cannot be told. Tradition assigned seven years to the period between his departure from home and the solemn Night of Enlightenment beneath the tree which preserved the memory of the great struggle and the final victory.\* The bonds of ignorance and passion were broken for ever. He had won the bliss of Emancipation, he had become a Perfect Buddha.†

\* The successor of the tree still stands at Buddha Gayā.

† Cp. below, Chapter III. The following sketch is based on the earliest consecutive narrative of the events which followed the attainment of the enlightenment constituting him a Buddha, prefixed to the collection of the Rules of the Order (*S.B.E.* xiii., p. 73 ff.).

Tradition dwelt with a certain artistry on the first weeks of the Buddha's enjoyment of the new-found vision of Reality. Typical figures came before him as he sat under the shade of one forest-tree after another, a haughty Brāhman, a devout serpent-king, two travelling merchants who respectfully offered him food, and became his first lay disciples. To the serpent-king the Buddha described the inward peace of the self-mastery achieved after his long exertion :

“ Happy is the solitude of him who is full of joy,  
Who has learnt the Truth, who sees the Truth.  
Happy is freedom from malice in this world,  
Self-restraint towards all beings that have life.  
Happy is freedom from lust in this world,  
Getting beyond all desires;  
The putting away of that pride which comes from  
the thought ‘ I am.’  
This truly is the highest happiness ”\*

Here are the elements of the Buddhist ideal. Its foundation is the apprehension of the ultimate facts of life, reached not by reasoning but by immediate insight. When this is once gained, all ill-will disappears and conflict ceases. The passions of sense are subdued. The disciple no longer demands that the world shall minister to his gratification. He is delivered from the arro-

\* *S.B.E.* xiii., p. 81.

gance of claiming the recognition of his own individuality. The cravings on<sup>o</sup> which his being has been reared have died away, and in this calm is intense but tranquil joy. To awaken in men the right vision was therefore the Teacher's aim. But the darkness of ignorance and lust and hatred was hard to penetrate, and the oppositions of stupidity and misunderstanding filled him with dismal anticipations of weariness and annoyance. "Alas," thought the Great Brahmā, "the world is undone if the Buddha does not declare the Truth," and he presented himself before Gotama to assure him that there were some in whom the mind's eye was dulled by hardly any dust and they would understand; and the Blessed One, looking over the world, saw men of various dispositions and capacities like lotuses in a pool, some blooming under the water, some on its surface, and some emerging out of it, and he answered Brahmā :

"Wide open is the door of the Deathless to all who  
have ears to hear,  
Let them send forth faith to meet it."\*

So the Sower went forth to sow, and came at last, travelling a hundred miles to the north-west, to Benares. There in the deer-park of Isipatana,

\* *S.B.E.* xiii., p. 88.

still represented by a fine wood, he found the five ascetics who had watched his earlier austerities with admiration, but had left him in angry disappointment when he took ordinary food. To them he announced that he had discovered a Middle Way, between the two extremes of a life of pleasure and a life of self-mortification. It led to insight and wisdom; its fruit was serenity, knowledge, enlightenment, Nirvana. Let them realise the four great Truths in which it was summed up—the fact of suffering, the further facts that such suffering has its cause in the craving for personal satisfaction, that it will cease when that craving is stilled, and that there is a Noble Eightfold Path of self-discipline which issues in that result—and deliverance was assured. That emancipation could not be lost. For those who realised it there was no more re-birth. Under the might of the Buddha's words one of the Five, Kondañña, obtained the "pure and spotless Eye of the Truth." He saw the fundamental principle of all reality, whatever had a beginning must also in due course have an end. There was the core of truth, the impermanence of everything in this world of time. To apply it to every phase of conscious life and changing circumstance, and show how its recognition provided the means for the eradication of

all ill, was the Teacher's task. Well might the *devas* all the way from earth to the topmost heaven through ten thousand worlds rejoice that the Rule of the Truth had been established, such that no power of evil could prevail against it. Well might Kondañña seek initiation at the Buddha's hands. "Come," said the Blessed One, "lead a holy life for the sake of the complete extinction of suffering." Under further instruction the remaining Four gained the same insight. And as the Buddha unfolded the Truths from day to day the minds of all Five were purified from false attachments, and escaped from the confusing power of the four "Intoxicants"—sensuality, lust of life, speculation or wrong views, and ignorance. They had reached holiness, so that with the Teacher there were six Saints in the world.

It was not long before the news of the conversion of the Five Ascetics spread to Benares. There one night Yasa, the son of a wealthy city official, waking from sleep, saw under the lamp-light the sleeping forms of the women musicians of his chamber in various disarray. Weariness and disgust filled his mind. Rising noiselessly he put on his gilt slippers and stole out of the palace, quitted the city, and made his way to the deer-park. It was dawn, and the Buddha was walking up and down in the fresh air. "Alas! what

distress. Alas! what danger," cried Yasa. "Here is no distress, here is no danger," said the Buddha. "Come here and sit down; I will teach you the Truth." And he talked to him of the common duties, of the conduct that would lead to heaven, of the vanity of worldliness, and the blessings of abandoning sensual desires. The mind of the youth responded eagerly and grew ripe for higher insight, and when the Four Truths were imparted to him, he too obtained the illuminating Eye.

Meantime his flight from the palace had been discovered. His father anxiously traced his footmarks to the deer-park, and there enquired of the Buddha for his son. Gotama addressed to him the same exhortation to morality, the same warnings against selfishness and passion. The mind of the older man moved less rapidly than that of the younger, but he too received a profound impression. It seemed to him that what had been overturned had been set up again, what had been hidden was now revealed. A lamp had been brought into the darkness; he had lost his way, and the right road had been shown him.\* He sought no initiation into the new fellowship, but humbly prayed to be accepted as a disciple who had taken his refuge in the Buddha.

The conversion of Yasa had important results.

\* This formula is constantly repeated

His mother and his wife became lay disciples. Four friends from noble city• families came to him to be presented to the Buddha for instruction. They, too, won their freedom from attachment to the world, and the little group of Saints now numbered eleven. The movement grew steadily as comrades came in from the country round. One after another secured release from the "Intoxicants," till the Teacher had sixty Saints under his direction. The time had come to spread the new doctrine far and wide.

"Go ye now and wander," said the Buddha in his parting words, "for the gain of the many, for the welfare of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, for the gain, and for the welfare of gods and men. Let not two of you go the same way. Preach the Truth which is glorious in the beginning, glorious in the middle, glorious at the end, in the spirit and in the letter. Proclaim a consummate, perfect, and pure life of holiness."\*

So the great Buddhist missions were begun. The converts were at first brought to Gotama himself to receive ordination. But increasing distances rendered this more and more inconvenient, and his needful periods of retirement and solitude were disturbed. The disciples accordingly received permission to admit converts

\* *S.B.E.* xiii., p. 112.

themselves, and under their enthusiasm the Order steadily grew. The King of Magadha, Bimbisāra, desired to hear the new Teacher, as Herod wished to see Jesus. With a multitude of Brāhmans and householders he came to pay his respects, and a great crowd with the monarch at their head obtained the Eye of the Truth. The next day Bimbisāra entertained the Buddha and his followers at his palace in the capital, and presented him with his pleasure-ground, the Bamboo Grove, near the city, as a place of rest and quiet, yet easy of access to enquirers. It was the first of many similar donations.

It happened that a wandering ascetic named Sañjaya with two hundred and fifty disciples was then residing in the neighbourhood.\* Among his company were two young Brāhmans, Sāriputta and Moggallāna. They had pledged each other that whichever first attained the Deathless should tell the other. Struck by the serene appearance of one of the Saints on his daily pilgrimage for food, Sāriputta asked in whose name he had given up the world, and what was his doctrine. The mendicant brother modestly explained that he was but a young disciple, and could not expound it in detail, but summed up the spirit of it in the

\* Buddhist figures often run into such numbers, 250, 500, 1,000, 10,000

fundamental maxim that of all things proceeding from a cause the great Samāha had proclaimed the origin and the cessation. Upon this Sāriputta obtained the pure and spotless Eye of the Truth, and went to tell his friend. As soon as Moggallāna saw him he was moved by the serene countenance of his companion. "Have you really reached the Deathless?" he enquired. "I have," was the assured reply, and on hearing what he had learned Moggallāna also gained the precious Eye.

The two friends then resolved to join the Buddha, and the disciples of Sañjaya agreed to accompany them. On learning the intention of his two chief adherents the indignant Sañjaya sought to detain them by offering to share the leadership of the community with them. He could not shake their resolve. Sāriputta and Moggallāna were welcomed by Gotama as a most distinguished and auspicious pair, and Sañjaya's followers transferred their allegiance to the Buddha.

The number of young nobles from Magadha who adopted the religious life in the new Order now excited considerable disquiet. There would be no more fathers, it was complained, to beget sons; wives were widowed; families would become extinct. When the brethren went out for alms

of food they were reviled. "This noise will not last long," said the Buddha when they told him that he was abused, "after a week it will be over. When they revile you, say—

"It is by means of the true doctrine that the Great Heroes lead men!

Who will murmur at the wise, who lead men by the power of the Truth?"\*

And, as the Teacher had predicted, the people understood, and the noise was over after seven days.

## II

Such was the traditional story of the origin of the great Order. Pious imagination invested it with many legendary embellishments. Māra was on the watch at every turn, to frustrate the Buddha's efforts, and the disciples, like the Christian Saints of later days, were constantly engaged in repelling his assaults. Lay-followers naturally remained in the world, but the detachment required for the higher life could only be realised by withdrawal from its occupations and the unflinching severance of all home ties. The early appeal of the Teacher laid such marked emphasis on insight and knowledge that the primary response came from the educated young

\* *S.B.E.* xiii., p. 151.

men of what were called good families. The swiftness of their apprehension and the rapidity of their moral progress to the attainment of Emancipation could not be maintained when all kinds of applicants sought admission. Race, caste, rank, occupation, age—for boys even took the vows—were at first no barrier. From the prince and the Brāhman to the slave the Paths were open to all. Even women at last gained entry as Gotama's aunt by her persistence finally wrested from him an unwilling consent. But the indiscriminate acceptance of new members soon called for regulation. Boys demanded pleasant food, soldiers exemption from service, criminals escape from punishment, debtors release from creditors' claims, sufferers from loathsome diseases medical care. The Order had to be guarded from the intrusion of the unfit; no one should be admitted under twenty years of age, and for new aspirants instruction must be provided. The precise stages of development cannot be exactly traced. The candidate's hair and beard were shorn; he put on the yellow robes made out of rags; and professed his faith in the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Order. This was his formal abandonment of the world. Later on he was presented by a "learned and competent" member to a group of not less than ten brethren,

and upon his admission he was placed under a qualified instructor who must have been already ten years in the community.

It was a grave and strenuous discipline to which the postulant was thus introduced. Gotama described it as a Middle Way. On the one side was the world with its interests, its enjoyments, its passions; on the other the hair-clad ascetic or the naked devotee. When people saw the brethren soliciting food, or entertained with substantial meals at the houses of the rich, or comfortably housed with beds protected from the wind, they were inclined to murmur at their easy life. Gotama's cousin, Devadatta, sought to induce him to make the discipline more severe. Here and there the liberality of the laity erected large residences with halls for exercise, store-rooms for robes and other requisites, warm baths, and ample grounds. But generally the brethren lived in little groups of huts; and they were expected to retire from time to time into forest solitudes where they sat beneath the trees, or on the hill-tops where they matched the freedom of sunlight and space with the interior sense of liberty.

The origins of the Christian Church were very different. The disciples whom Jesus had gathered around him assembled at Jerusalem when they had recovered from the shock of his death under

the leadership of the inner group of the Twelve Apostles.\* The little community in no way severs itself from the religious life around. Daily teaching in the Temple attracts increasing numbers who are enrolled in the new fellowship by baptism. They are all filled with a great hope, the return of the Lord reserved in heaven till the great day when he shall judge the world. In eager anticipation ordinary occupations are abandoned. Property is sold and its proceeds are poured into a common fund, for many poor, especially widows, need maintenance. When Jesus first sent out the Twelve to preach, he bade them limit their mission to their own people, "Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans." But the persecution which followed on the death of Stephen scattered a number of preachers through Judea and Samaria, and others carried the word along the coast of Phœnicia, to the island of Cyprus, and to the brilliant capital of Syria, Antioch. Step by step, in the spirit of Jesus, but without his personal direction, the evangelising of the world was begun. Buddhism had at the outset made its appeal to all humanity, irrespective of race or class. Christianity was at

\* Acts i. describes the method of finding a successor to fill the place of Judas.

first embarrassed by conflict arising out of the religion from which it sprang. Must believers who were not Jews undertake the obligations of the Mosaic law? The courage and energy of the great champion of spiritual freedom, and the rapid increase of the adherents of the new faith, answered that question; and the tragic fall of the Holy City, which drove the Jewish disciples in Jerusalem into retreat across the Jordan, confirmed the answer. The future lay in expansion, and the spirit of the Church expressed itself in the command ascribed to Jesus on the Galilean mount after the resurrection, "Go ye and make disciples of all the nations."

Deprived of the supervision of Christ the Christian communities had to organise themselves. They had no formal bond of union. Each assembly regulated its own affairs. No central authority claimed control over the rest. The Apostle Paul might indeed watch over his converts with a solicitude which might break out into wrath and denunciation. But he disclaimed dominion over their faith, he wished to be the helper of their joy. The simple confession of Jesus as Lord, and heartfelt belief that God had raised him from the dead, sufficed to secure salvation. And this was open to all, to women as to men, Greek and barbarian as well as long-

descended Jew, the slave as well as the free. A church might even be founded without the rite of baptism, for Paul could only remember baptizing Crispus and Gaius and Stephanas's household at Corinth; Christ had not sent him to baptize, but to preach the gospel. As the generations of disciples succeeded each other, and the applicants for admission increased, it became necessary to regulate the conditions of entry. Not many wise after the flesh at first presented themselves, not many mighty, not many noble. The philosophic observer of later days might scoff at the believers as ignorant and stupid and low; he knew little or nothing of the long and serious discipline which often preceded baptism, or the watchfulness with which the members of doubtful professions, the soldier, the actor, the schoolmaster who must teach the stories of the gods, were all regarded. As the vivid spiritual energies of the first days declined, the travelling apostles and prophets became fewer and fewer and at last disappeared. The spontaneity of the early ministry gradually faded away. The need of organisation grew more and more acute as the expectation of the Lord's appearance with the angelic host slowly gave place to the perception that the Church must adapt itself to permanent conditions in the social order. Its worship must

be duly directed; its teaching systematised; its business arrangements safeguarded; its charities properly administered; its hospitalities adequately discharged. Within a century after the death of Jesus, Ignatius, the Bishop of Antioch, on his way to martyrdom at Rome, still sees the world hastening to its end, and proclaims a threefold ministry within the Church of bishops, priests, and deacons, as part of the divine ordinance in the great conflict between the power of Satan and the immeasurable design of God. The development of these three orders takes place at different rates in different localities, but little by little through mutual intercourse practice is unified. Confessors, readers, widows, virgins, form specific groups with their own duties and privileges, but there is as yet no dual standard of conduct such as that between the secular disciple and the Buddhist monk. The difference between the layman and the "religious" will appear at a later day. Meantime Christian thinkers like Irenæus appealed to the continuity of history from Creation to the Gospel; the Church was the heir of prophecy; and over the separate congregations from east to west, from Mesopotamia to Gaul, arose a vision of a spiritual Church created before sun and moon, a virgin daughter of light, to which each earthly assembly belonged

in mystical fellowship, the ideal impersonation of God's saving purpose for mankind.

### III

“Come,” said Gotama, “lead a holy life for the sake of the extinction of suffering.” What was the foundation of this appeal? He stood outside the accepted religious order of his day. He calmly ignored the great tradition of the Vedas and the pile of technical studies reared upon them for the maintenance of the revelation unimpaired. He rejected in like manner the whole sacrificial system, and the Brāhmans’ claims. He took his stand upon common experience, on the bitter consciousness of the ills that flesh is heir to, on revolt against the pleasures as well as the cares and sorrows of the world, on the deep yearning for peace and tranquillity of heart. In place of a life of passion and struggle he offered one of self-mastery and calm. He had discovered a path to freedom; he would show the way to those who liked to tread it after him. It demanded high moral attainment, but Gotama did not address himself primarily to the conscience. He called first of all for knowledge, a frank recognition of the facts of life, a just estimate of their value. His immediate task was to awaken the perception that all conscious

existence was enveloped in suffering; his next to arouse the intellectual apprehension of its cause. The scene of our days and years is full of change; from moment to moment it is never the same; it generates in its inhabitants perpetual craving for the satisfactions of sense. Whatever has had a beginning must have an end; this doom hangs over all felicity, frustrates all hope, poisons all common joy. The core of ethics lay within a sweeping rejection of all that the world holds dear. The philosophic Christian might look on its delights and its temptations with a like conviction, "the world passeth away and the lust thereof;" but behind its transitory show lay God's eternity, and *there* was security for all who did his will.

Jesus had started with a great moral challenge, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The disciple of Gotama had his fate in his own power. As he had been making himself in all his previous lives, so it lay with him to determine his own future. There was a way of escape from an unending series of re-births, would he accept it? He had no fear of a God who could cast him, soul and body, into hell. He was himself responsible for all that might befall him. Jesus bade men recognise that they lived under the rule of a righteous God, who had claimed

their allegiance from the days of old, and compassed them continually with his Providence. As he clothed the grass and counted their hairs, so would he give holy spirit to them that asked him. Their days were passed in constant relation with the Power that wrought the world. If they were exposed to his penal dooms, they knew that these were not arbitrary or capricious; had he not revealed in the Commandments the conduct which would enable them to enter into life, nay, had he not made them capable themselves of judging what is right? Had he not thus shown himself their Father; and if they must needs humble themselves before his holiness, might they not trust his mercy to forgive? Each Scripture had its tale of a wandering son. The Buddhist story told how the father, searching for him, removed to another country and there became rich. One day as he sat surrounded by attendants at his palace gate, he saw his son approaching, forlorn and in rags. He does not reveal himself, but as his son slinks away to find alms among the poor, he devises a discipline of restoration. For twenty years he supports him in mean tasks, and gradually, without disclosing his relationship, makes over his wealth to him. At length, inured to duty, and weaned from the temptations of the world, he is formally pre-

sented to the king and the citizens as his son and heir.\* Here is a scheme of ethical training. The Buddha's object is the formation of moral character. It is a character of lofty type, but in Gotama's teaching there is no place for repentance. The sense of alienation from a holy God, of shame at the violation of a Father's will and love, are unknown in a scheme which exhibits the man who has really conquered all self-love as the highest being in the universe. The early disciples, under the spell of Gotama's commanding personality, were believed to have attained the "Eye of the Truth" with an immediate awakening, and complete holiness was realised soon after. But this rarely happened later, and even Ānanda, his devoted personal attendant for so many years, only achieved entire self-mastery after the Teacher's death. To the disciple, however, the way was always open. No share in another's guilt darkened his conscience, no inherited corruption rendered him incapable of good. He did not belong to a "mass of perdition." True, he was limited by his own past, and the Buddha's vision could always distinguish those who were made ready for the reception of the Truths by acts of virtue in previous lives.

\* In the "Lotus of the Perfect Truth" (see below, p. 209), *S.B.E.* xxi., p. 100 *ff.*

True, also, that Buddhist folklore did not disdain, any more than Christianity, to threaten the terrors of the judgment-seat and the pains of hell. But it never declared them to be everlasting, or attributed to a God of love the purpose of maintaining multitudes of his creatures not only in perpetual suffering but also in eternal sin.

The rejection of all ontological conceptions led inevitably to the repudiation of all religious authority, and the abandonment of all ceremonial worship. Gotama did not in any way deny the existence of Brahmā and the other deities of popular belief. But the "Father of all that are and are to be" had after all only a limited duration. Those who professed to be the guardians of his word and the exponents of his will had never seen him; they were no better than a string of sightless men wandering in a waterless jungle, blind leaders leading blind followers to ruin. The word of the Master, the Perfectly Enlightened, was indeed infallible, and the disciple who gained the higher insight verified it for himself, just as for the medieval theologian *fides* was prior in time but *intellectus* was prior in reality. But in the lower levels the believer might need some assurance that the word which was imparted to him was really the truth. Tradition

ascribed to Gotama wondrous powers, such as were sometimes exerted also by members of the Order, and by other gifted men both before and outside it. It was believed that anyone so endowed could multiply appearances of himself or render himself invisible; he could pass through a wall, disappear through the ground or rise up out of it; he could walk on the water without sinking as if it were solid; he could travel sitting cross-legged through the air; he could even rise into the sky and touch sun and moon. When the Buddha, conversing with the youthful Yasa, saw his father approaching in search of his son, he rendered him invisible as he sat by his side. Looking over the world in the morning he could see who was ready to apprehend the Truths, and would pass through the air and win his attention by appearing cross-legged above him. Arriving at the Ganges' ferry with his disciples when the river was in flood, he did not wait for boat or raft, but vanished from one side and stood on the farther bank with the company of the brethren. But he made no appeal for faith "for the works' sake." He frankly admitted the danger of practising mystic wonders and declared his abhorrence of such calls for belief. What was the worth of such performances beside the insight arising from

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knowledge of the nature of the body and its impermanence, the realisation of the Truths, and the assurance of Emancipation !

On the last night of the Buddha's life he tenderly warned Ānanda that his followers should not think that their Master's word was ended, and they had no guide any more. The Teaching and the Rules of the Order should be their guide. But if differences arose concerning the word, which a brother might claim to have heard from the Teacher himself or from venerable and learned elders, how should they be settled? A curious passage attributed to the Buddha pre-  
vision of the difficulty in view of his death. The alleged word should neither be greeted with praise, nor rejected with scorn. It should be first carefully understood and then studiously compared with the Discourses (Suttas) and the Rules of the Order. These collections are here assumed as already in existence. The Buddha had himself written nothing. How many of the groups of formulæ in which his instructions were summarised had been drawn up by himself must remain doubtful. His long career and his constant preaching had probably enabled him to organise much of his thought and experience in definite shapes, and repetition had impressed them on the memory of those immediately around

him. Like the Jewish Rabbis who “received” from one generation to another, the members of philosophical schools handed on to their successors what they had learned from those who had passed on before. For hundreds of years there was no written record, but long habit and diligent training secured the preservation of vast collections of materials. Buddhist tradition ascribed the reduction of the two great groups of the Teaching and the Rules into definite canonical forms to a gathering of the brethren soon after Gotama’s death. There Ananda recited the Discourses, and the barber Upali the Rules. Their authority rested on remembrance, sustained by the assent of the assembled disciples. But these were themselves all saints, who had acquired the higher insight and had thereby won direct knowledge of the Truths. The Teaching was thus continuously justified afresh. True, as it comes down to us, it contains inconsistencies which perplex the modern student. But its main aims and methods had behind them a weight of experience which provided for it a continuous support. No theories of verbal inspiration ever gathered round the Scriptures. And no demand arose for an authorised interpretation of the deposit of faith contained in them. When a new type of Buddhism appeared, and the person of

the Founder was presented in terms of the Eternal which Gotama had deliberately kept out of view, the moral forces of peace and goodwill, and the sympathies of a common life, were strong enough to prevent recriminations of heresy, and enabled the adherents of different schools to work and study side by side.\*

The inclusion of Brahmā within the control of the Law of the Deed, and the repudiation of the whole claim to the possession of a supernatural authority on the part of the Brāhmans, led at once to the rejection of the ritual of worship. A memorial cultus was in due time evolved for which tradition provided a sanction in the Buddha's last hours. But Gotama would have none of the Brahmanical sacrifices within the Order. The slaughter of animals for offering was in the highest degree offensive to him. The first of the Ten Commandments forbade the taking of life. Travelling south of the Ganges with some five hundred followers the Teacher came to a village adjoining a great estate, a royal gift to an eminent Brāhman, Kutadanta. He was preparing for a costly sacrifice. Seven hundred bulls, and the same number of steers, heifers, goats, and rams, had been already

\* See the description of the University of Nālandā below, p. 276.

collected for the rite. The Brāhman, doubting if he had the knowledge to perform the ceremony on so grand a scale, went with a number of the priests assembled to take part in the celebration, and consulted the Buddha. It is an ironical situation. The Teacher with his disciples round him invites the attention of the professors of ritual as he tells a tale. There was once a king full of wealth and power, possessed of all things which a mortal could enjoy, and he proposed to offer a great sacrifice that should ensure him welfare for many days. His chaplain reminded him that his subjects were harassed by robbers who plundered the villages and made the roads unsafe. Let his majesty provide food and seed-corn for those who could farm, capital for those who could trade, and wages for those who could do king's service, and the country would be at peace. Order was thus first restored, and the sacrifice was then duly offered, but no animals were slain, no slaves or messengers were driven to the work of preparation by fear of the rod, each did his share with his own choice, and none who did not volunteer was compelled. And the nobles and ministers and officials, and the rich Brāhmans and the substantial householders all through the realm brought wealth to the king which he declined because he had enough by

fair taxation, and they went and did likewise. When Kutadanta's friends approve, the Brāhman himself enquires whether there are not still better forms of sacrifice. The Teacher suggests endowments for virtuous recluses, residences for members of the Order, and, better still, discipleship of the Buddha with a trusting heart. Better still are the five Abstinences, from taking life, from theft, unchastity, lying, and intoxicating drinks, and so on through the ascending scale of the achievements of Buddhist holiness. "There is no sacrifice that man can celebrate, O Brāhman, higher and sweeter than this." Light broke over the mind swathed in attachment to professional ideals. Kutadanta begged to be received as a disciple, released his intended victims to enjoy green pastures, fresh waters, and cool breezes, and attained the pure and spotless Eye of the Truth.\*

The disciples of Jesus naturally retained the Scriptures which their Master had so often quoted for instruction and warning. The Christian missionaries appealed to them as they preached in the synagogues; they provided the support of their message to the Gentiles. The Church was the heir of the privileges of the Jews. Had not the promise run that Israel

\* *Dialogues*, vol. i., pp. 173-184.

should be a kingdom of priests, serving among the nations as the ministers of God? For the true believers the promise was fulfilled by Christ. He constituted them into a kingdom where they became priests to God. Religion everywhere demanded its sanctuaries, its consecrated officers, its hallowed gifts. The temples stood in the market-places, by city halls, on harbour quays, in shady groves, on lofty hills. With vivid imagination the saints were figured as themselves the living stones of a spiritual house, and at the same time as the celebrants within it, charged with the duty of offering spiritual sacrifices. The great act of self-surrender on the cross was itself a fragrant sacrifice inspired by Christ's love; and Paul, contemplating death in his Roman prison, sees himself possibly poured out as a libation on the faith and service of the disciples. It was reasonable, then, that they should dedicate themselves, body and soul, to God, through whose mercy they had been raised from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. Each victory over the flesh was, as it were, a priestly act; and the apostle marks his breach with the ritual ordinances of the Law by depicting himself as priest of the Gospel, making an offering of the Gentile Church.

The prayers and praises of the community, and

the inward self-consecration of the saints, were not, however, the only modes of Christian sacrifice. The prophet Malachi had announced that from East to West God's name should be great among the Gentiles, and he would accept a pure offering in every place. To what could that refer but to the Thanksgiving or Eucharist which was the central act of worship on "the Lord's day"? The martyr Justin in the middle of the second century still emphatically vindicates the universal priesthood of all Christians. The Eucharistic bread and wine, with the associated prayers and thanksgivings offered by the faithful throughout the world, were real sacrifices which by their wide diffusion were obviously well-pleasing to God. But, added Justin, true to the spirit of sacerdotal cultus, God only receives sacrifices through his priests. In his description of the Sunday worship under the direction of the "president" of the meeting, Justin uses no title —presbyter, bishop, or priest. But participation in the sacred food must be carefully guarded. It was not common bread or wine. It was the centre of a mystery. A hundred years earlier the Apostle Paul had warned the Corinthians that to eat it unworthily was to risk death. In the generation before Justin, Ignatius had insisted that no Eucharist was valid unless celebrated by

a bishop or some person designated by him. Not only the recipients but the offering itself must be kept pure. Towards the end of the century Irenæus in Gaul repeats the same application of Malachi's prophecy, and at Carthage Tertullian († 200) regards both Baptism and the Eucharist as sacraments and the officers who administer them as priests. The function received its fullest elevation in the language of Cyprian fifty years later. From the days of the Flood all history converged upon the Passion. Therèin Christ, the chief priest of the Father, offered himself to him as a sacrifice. On the eve of his death he ordained its repetition in commemoration of himself, and that priest truly discharges the office of Christ who imitates what Christ did. Then only does he offer a true and full sacrifice to the Father when he strictly follows the practice of Christ himself. The conceptions of priesthood and sacrifice thus early planted in the Church naturally reacted on each other. The functions of the hierarchy acquired more and more importance. Luther might revive the doctrine of the universal priesthood of all true believers as a weapon against the claims of Rome. But to the vast majority of the faithful salvation is still mediated through the agency of the priest.

## IV

The holy life which Gotama prescribed for the members of his Community involved withdrawal from the world. Home must be abandoned, profession, trade, craft, left behind. But for this the ordinary person was not ready. The past which still lived in him veiled his insight; he was not prepared to gain the Eye of the Truth. This was no matter of social position. To privilege of birth, to advantages of wealth, to lowliness of origin or occupation, Gotama was indifferent. The variations of status which acquired such fixity in the caste-system of later days, he steadily ignored within his Order. There were "low" livelihoods like fishing, working in leather, mat-making, and many others, but the barber or the scavenger was welcomed to the fellowship as readily as the prince. As the Master went one day through the streets of Rājagaha, attended by his company of disciples, a poor road-sweeper, named Sunīta, carrying a yoke on his shoulders from which hung two baskets of rubbish, stood up against the wall to let him pass. The Buddha of his lovingkindness (so Sunīta sang) stopped as he went by; the scavenger, prostrating himself at his feet, asked leave to follow him—

“ Then he whose tender mercy watcheth all  
The world, the Master pitiful and kind,  
Gave me my answer: *Come, Bhikkhu!* he said,  
Thereby to me was ordination given.”\*

The slave was admitted as readily as in the Christian Church, provided he sought entry with his master’s consent, and the trade of the slave-dealer was forbidden to the lay “ hearer.”

From the outset of Gotama’s teaching numbers of men and women had come under his influence though they remained in their homes and continued their callings. In the midst of the world they might still live the unworldly life, as he told the wealthy father of his young disciple, Yasa, in the deer-park at Benares. Let them give generous alms, follow right principles, abstain from unworthy pleasures, and they would be on the road to heaven. It was an elementary morality, as much below the demands on members of the Order as the *bourgeois* type of Jesus the son of Sirach was below the challenge of Jesus of Nazareth. Little by little five simple rules emerged. In reverence for the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Order, the lay “ hearer ”

\* *Psalms of the Brethren*, tr. Mrs. Rhys Davids, p. 273. Tradition told that the Buddha first addressed Sunita, like Jesus summoning Zacchaeus. Sunita then found himself miraculously invested with bowl and robe.

must abstain from taking life, from theft, from unchastity, from lying, and from strong drink. Three more prohibitions were sometimes added in aid of simplicity of life, against meals at untimely hours at night, wearing garlands of flowers, and sleeping on an elaborate bed instead of a simple mat upon the ground.\* The young man was bidden to avoid four principles that would lead him astray—lust, ill-will, stupidity, and fear. He was strenuously warned against wandering about the streets at unseasonable hours, frequenting public diversions, gambling, association with bad companions, idleness. Six types of mutual duty were described, between parents and children, pupils and teachers, husbands and wives, friends and relatives, masters and slaves, the householder and recluses and Brāhmans.† Five evil trades were condemned—the armourer, the slave-dealer, the butcher, the publican, and the poison-seller. Here is something more than worldly wisdom. A Chinese Confucian or a Greek might have missed something, though not what a Christian would have found lacking. There is no recognition of the State and its claims. The duty of the citizen is

\* *Sutta Nipāta* ii. 14, vv. 18-26. *S.B.E.* x (ii), p. 65.

† *Dialogues*, vol. iii., p. 178 *ff.*

ignored ; the social unit is the family. But over the whole there broods a spirit of gentleness and affection. The picture is that of integrity, self-control, mutual respect, truth, loyalty, consideration, concord.

“ To succour father and mother,  
To cherish wife and child,  
To follow a peaceful calling,  
This is the greatest blessing.

To give alms, to live religiously,  
To give help to relatives,  
To do blameless deeds,  
This is the greatest blessing.

To cease and abstain from sin,  
To eschew strong drink,  
To be diligent in good deeds,  
This is the greatest blessing.

Reverence and lowliness,  
Contentment and gratitude,  
To receive religious teaching at due seasons,  
This is the greatest blessing.

To be long-suffering and meek,  
To associate with the disciples of Buddha,  
To hold religious discourse at due seasons,  
This is the greatest blessing.

Temperance and chastity,  
Discernment of the Four Great Truths,  
The prospect of Nirvāna,  
This is the greatest blessing.

The soul of one unshaken  
By the changes of this life,  
Inaccessible to sorrow, passionless, secure,  
This is the greatest blessing.”

Here was a treasure more precious than gold hidden in a deep pit; a treasure that man or woman might possess, laid up in the heart, a treasure of piety, charity, temperance, soberness. “When a man leaves the fleeting riches of this world, this he takes with him after death.”\*

The blue-necked peacock, said the poet, could never attain the swiftness of the swan, neither could the householder equal the monk. When Gotama announced to the five mendicants at Benares that he had discovered a Middle Path between life in the world and extreme asceticism, he was not (as he was afterwards charged) propounding an easy course. The strenuousness of mental discipline which he demanded needed a healthy body. True that in the forest solitude where the monk must sometimes pass seasons of meditation, he must face hardship, wind and rain and cold. But in the community where brethren dwelt together he must take regular exercise and beg his daily meal. In the larger residences provision was made for warmth and baths. These were the means for supporting the activities of thought and self-conquest which the advance to perfect holiness required. Yet one

\* *Mahāmangala Sutta*, tr. Childers (*Khuddakapāṭha* v. and viii.).

of the first things which the novice was expected to learn was the impurity and transitory nature of the body. It was the immediate illustration of the first of the Four Truths, the universality of "ill" of every kind. The world was on fire—burning with lust, ill-will, and stupidity—how could there be laughter and joy? "Look at this dressed-up lump, sickly, and frail, this heap of corruption breaks to pieces, life indeed ends in death."\* Why did not men seek a light in the darkness? So the novice was bidden to meditate on all that was hidden beneath the skin which saves it from being seen as it really is, full of odious viscera, ejecting continuous impurities. With a fine scorn the poet cried, "Then its hollow head is filled with the brain, A fool led by ignorance thinks it a fine thing!" The novice was accordingly sent to the cemetery to meditate. There he would see the corpse swollen and livid, uncared for by relatives, carrion for dogs and jackals, crows and vultures, wolves and worms.† Before the beautiful queen of King Bimbisāra (so ran the tale) the Buddha conjured up the figure of a woman fair as a heavenly nymph, and then made her pass to old age, till with

\* *Dhammapada* xi. 146-148 (condensed, tr. Max Müller).

† *Sutta Nipāta* i. 11, tr. Fausböll.

broken teeth, grey hair, and wrinkled skin, she fell to the ground.\* So from birth onwards the instability of life was full of pain, and the maladies of the body were matched by the ills of the mind. What striving and failure, what frustrated ambition, what mortified passion, what baffled hope, what disappointed endeavour, what inexpressible bereavement, what love wrecked by accident, disease, and death! What anguish of mind, what grief and dejection, what lamentation and despair! Not all the waters of the Four Great Oceans equalled the tears shed in humanity's long pilgrimage through the innumerable ages of its past!

Gotama did not approve of the religious suicide by starvation which was occasionally practised in a contemporary sect. Nor did he teach that life was worthless. It provided his hearers with their opportunity for learning how to extricate themselves from it. It was to be used with diligence, not squandered in self-indulgence. The poet might urge "Look on the world as a bubble," but it was the sequel of the exhortation "Follow the law of virtue, follow not that of sin." There have been Christian teachers who have swathed existence in gloom, and depicted man as a pilgrim through a "vale

\* *Psalms of the Sisters*, p. 82, tr. Mrs. Rhys Davids.

of tears.'" Christian devotion has been described as a wail of penitence, and the human lot as sunk in misery. In the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth under the dismal shade of Calvinism Bacon could expand a Greek epigram into something more than a mere poetical exercise :

" The world's a bubble, and the life of man  
    Less than a span :  
In his conception wretched, from the womb  
    So to the tomb ;  
Curst from his cradle, and brought up to years  
    With cares and fears,  
Who then to frail mortality shall trust,  
    But limns on water, or but writes in dust."

Strange echoes of his conclusion after reviewing courts, country, city, home—

" What then remains, but that we still should cry  
    For being born, or being born, to die "—

may be heard in the following century from Drummond of Hawthornden—

" Who would not one of these two offers try,  
    Not to be born, or being born, to die "

or from Bishop King—

" At least with that Greek sage still make us cry  
    Not to be born, or being born, to die."\*

\* Grosart: *Miscellanies of the Fuller Worthies' Library* i., 1871; "Poems of Bacon," p. 79.

Evangelical theology was still infected with the same plaint, and Milman prayed for speedy escape—

“ Lord, have mercy and remove us  
Early to thy place of rest.”

The application of the doctrine of the extension of the Incarnation through the sacraments in modern Anglican theology, “muscular Christianity,” the development of scientific interest in the human frame, the demands of social service, within the Church, to say nothing of the vast expansion of activity outside it, have all modified this pseudo-pessimism; and the disciple of to-day, recognising that life is a trust and he is called to discharge it faithfully, faces its vicissitudes with courage and accepts its privileges with thanksgiving.

The First Truth, then, that the Buddhist had to apprehend was that all conscious life was steeped in Ill. This was the fundamental element of the knowledge which was indispensable to deliverance. The way of escape lay through a moral victory, and the prime condition of the warfare which led to it was the recognition of the facts. Two mighty facts lay at the centre of the whole sphere of existence. Each living being, whether deity, man, or demon, belonged to a vast succession which flowed on in a per-

petual stream, without beginning, in unending change. Nothing was permanent. The world would pass away as innumerable worlds before it had arisen and disappeared. The gods would vanish and others would take their places. Humanity was under a like doom. Early or late Death went his rounds, ever alert and irresistible. The ceaseless generations formed one incessant funeral train. Who that truly understood this would not wish to be freed from entanglement in such a scene of lamentation, mourning, and woe?

But, secondly, this gigantic stream which bore along the mighty multitude of events and persons in unbroken conjunction was no casual flow. It had, indeed, no assignable origin. No Creator had started it, pronouncing it very good. Yet its course was not undirected. Nothing could happen without a cause. Each event sprang out of some antecedent, and that in its turn had been produced by something else. In all the incalculable series there was no chance, no accident, no caprice, no fate. The whole scene at any given moment, with all its ranks and kinds of occupants, was under the sovereignty of Law. Mankind was for ever fashioning itself. Each human being was the issue of all the past. The nature of the law through which he entered

life was not theological. No first pair had drawn down on themselves a sentence of labour and pain, or involved all their descendants in corruption. Nor was the law which presided over birth merely biological. The real antecedents of the new-born infant were not those of historic genealogy. Doubtless it was desirable that healthy and clever parents should transmit their qualities to their offspring. But what was it that determined the family in which such offspring should appear? Far, far back in the interminable succession some thought had arisen, some word had been spoken, some act had been done, in other circumstances, in another scene, among corresponding persons, which added to the product of character for good or evil. And this was bound to work out its due result. Each babe was started on its career with a physical body and a social position which it owed immediately to its parents. But the advantages or drawbacks thus involved were themselves due to past behaviour which might be generations or even ages old. The nexus which bound them together was invisible except to the perfect insight of the Buddha, and only by the enlightened and the saintly could it be arrested. The law which ruled the entire field of existence was moral. The abilities and aptitudes, the tempers, the impulses,

the passions and dispositions, wrapped in each child, were derived from progenitors of im-memorial antiquity under the solemn authority of the Deed.

There was, however, another aspect to this process. As Gotama meditated upon Ill, and sought to discover the antecedents which led to birth and the production of a new being, behind the physical act of the parents he found in the chain of moral causation two elements in the nature of the preceding being whose successor was about to be born. The roots of continued existence lay in ignorance of its real nature—its transiency and its liability to suffering—and in the craving for the satisfactions of sense which entangled it in false pleasures and impelled it to seek ever new and vain delights. In a thoughtless man this craving grew like a creeper. It urged him from life to life like a monkey seeking fruit in the forest. Image after image supplied the teachers with warnings. The bondage of this fierce thirst drove the sufferers about like snared hares. Even if its wants were suppressed, as long as its source was unsubdued the pain of life would be renewed again and again, as a tree cut down would spring up afresh as long as its root was safe. Whoever sought escape from re-birth and all its woes must begin by control

of his senses, his passions, his base and foolish longings after his own gratification. That is the language of the higher morality in all ages. The way to inward freedom is by the path of self-conquest. So Augustine wrote in strange harmony with the Buddhist's perception of the incessant sequence of origin and dissolution :

“ Whithersoever the soul of man turns itself unless towards thee, it is riveted upon sorrows, yea though it is riveted upon things beautiful. They rise and set, and by rising they begin as it were to be; they grow, that they may be perfected; and perfected they wax old and wither; and all grow not old, but all wither. This is the law of them. . . . Let not my soul be riveted to these things with the glue of love, through the senses of the body. In these things is no repose; they abide not, they flee, and who can follow them with the senses of the flesh? For the sense of the flesh is slow, because it is the sense of the flesh, and thereby is it bounded. It sufficeth, for that it was made for; but it sufficeth not to stay things running their course from their appointed starting place to the end appointed.”\*

Why then, cries Augustine, be perverted and follow the flesh? “ Be it converted and follow thee.”

## V

That was the problem for the Buddhist also. But he had only himself to rely on. “ Be your

\* *Confessions* iv. 15, Oxford tr., 1871 (condensed).

own lamps," said the Teacher as death drew near, "be your own refuge." The whole responsibility for his deliverance lay on the disciple. "Self," said the poet, "is the lord of self, who else could be the lord?"\* The teacher who wanted to subdue others must first master himself, but how hard was the task. By canal and aqueduct men lead the water where they want; fletchers bend the arrow; "wise men," said the Sage, "fashion themselves."† The process might be long and difficult. Even Ānanda, the devoted attendant of the Buddha for so many years, only attained holiness after his death. The conquest of self was greater than the victory of a single man in battle over a thousand thousand foes. "Ye are they," said Jesus to the Twelve at the Passover supper, "who have been with me in my temptations." The Buddha, like the Christ, was not left unassailed; and Māra, repeatedly baffled by the Master, played the tempter again and again to the disciples. And sometimes, wearied of the effort demanded, they gave up the quest and returned to the world.

For the earnest a resolute training was provided. The five Abstinences imposed on the laity were of course binding within the Order.

\* *Dhammapada* xii. 160.

† *Ibid.*, vi. 80.

The prohibition against taking life meant positively compassion and kindness to all creatures. Lying carried with it slander, rudeness, and frivolous talk; all speech must be that of the peacemaker, reaching to the heart and worthy to be laid up in it. Lesser moralities forbade participation in manifold kinds of public shows and magic arts. Conduct must be grave and serious; the doors of the senses must be guarded; the novice must learn of the elder how to be mindful and self-possessed. The ideal of conduct was of course seen in the Buddha himself, and was presented in the form of the Noble Eightfold Path.\* This was a summary of ethical teaching, designed to cover the whole field of behaviour without and within. Each of its eight divisions embraced a number of mental and moral conditions which it was the business of the elder to expound and enforce for the young recluse. He cannot start until he has acquired (1) the Right View. He must be equipped with proper ideas about the world and the significance of life. No superstition or delusion must mislead him. Let him look straight at the facts of existence, and grasp the First Truth, the universality of Ill. This will lead him (2) to Right

\* On the meanings of "Aryan" (= noble), see Rhys Davids' *Early Buddhism*, p. 49.

Resolve, beget the aspirations and endeavours worthy of an intelligent man. It will sustain him in the needful renunciation of all sensual desire, free him from all wish to injure others and all pleasure in inflicting pain, and produce a temper of kindness and benevolence. Right Speech (3) will guard him from every kind of falsehood, from backbiting, malicious and abusive language, from foolish tales and unworthy gossip. By Right Action (4) his conduct will be peaceful, honest, and pure, in abstinence from taking life, stealing, and carnal indulgence. Right Livelihood (5) will avoid all hurt or danger to any living thing. Right Effort (6) demanded assiduous self-discipline and control. The recluse must have the right aim, and set himself in readiness to carry it out, as a man takes up the reins and gets his horses in hand before starting. Sinful conditions must be prevented from arising, and abandoned or expelled if they have arisen. Meritorious states not yet attained must be called into being, well grounded when they are in existence, and guarded from confusion so that they may develop and come to perfection. These were all preparatory to that cultivation of the higher mental and moral powers which led to the realisation of Buddhist holiness, Right Mindfulness (7) and Right Meditation (8).

Great stress was laid on the steadfast maintenance of watchfulness. The recluse must be constantly on the alert in every phase of experience. He must be mindful of his body in all his actions, eating and drinking, sleeping and rising, walking or at rest, talking or silent; its constituents, its impurities, its impending decay, should be ever present to his thoughts. Let him be ardent, strenuous, self-possessed, then he will hanker no more after the objects and pleasures of the world and will feel no dejection at their loss. He will deal in like manner with his sensations and feelings without and within, with his thoughts and all the contents of his consciousness, and finally with the whole framework of his consciousness itself, and the conditions which have helped to build it up and determine its exercise. The practice of this untiring attentiveness required a long training in concentration. For this purpose solitude and meditation were needed. From the lower exercises, such as contemplation of the body in the charnel-ground half devoured by jackals or vultures, the advanced monk rose to certain high contemplations or Raptures both mental and moral. By successive processes of abstraction and intense inward withdrawal he sought to reach a void in which all consciousness of ideas and feelings wholly passed away. Through these it was believed Gotama himself

had passed and returned just before his death. Ethically the Raptures resulted in four Sublime States of Love, Pity, Sympathy, and Equanimity.\*

Here was plainly a discipline of great severity. To climb its heights required sustained energy, prolonged endeavour, unwearied patience. The days of sudden conversion and rapid attainment of saintship soon passed. Failures and falls showed what dangers beset the unintelligent and weak. Recurring lists of difficulties were gradually compiled, with instructions for surmounting them. As in the ethical groups of the higher activities the same terms recur in different connexions. There were five Hindrances to be conquered, such as (1) every kind of sensuous desire, covetousness, lust; (2) ill-temper, malevolence, hatred; (3) sloth and torpor of body or mind; (4) "flurry and worry," fretfulness, irritability; (5) doubt, wavering, perplexity. In view of the constant requirement of active intelligence, the recluse was bidden to investigate and examine all the teaching offered to him, in harmony with the Pauline injunction to "prove all things and hold fast the good." There were Bonds to be broken—sometimes three, sometimes five or ten. First came the heresy of being a "self," the delusion of egotism which bred the claim "I

\* Cp. below, p. 120.

want that," "this is mine," the root of all the frantic struggles and brutal oppressions of the world. Next ranked doubt, with all its uncertainty of grasp, its feebleness of purpose, its wanderings and hesitations. Thirdly was reckoned reliance on the efficacy of rites and ceremonies (with which Christianity has been classed in modern days). It was a protest against elaborations of ritual on the one hand and extremes of austerity upon the other for the purpose of gaining a blessed lot in heaven. No external action however punctually performed could take the place of right affection and understanding in the heart. Those who had broken these bonds were said to have "entered the Stream." They were safely started on their course and would never turn back. Final perseverance was sure. Sensuality, ill-will, the desire for existence hereafter in a world of bliss, in a glorified body or as a formless radiance, pride, self-righteousness, were so many more shackles from which the recluse must free himself, and last of all was ignorance, the result of dulness or stupidity, the lack of clearness and penetration due to the surviving traces of self-assertion. Not till these were eradicated was full Enlightenment attained, with its inward blessings of mindfulness, energy, calmness, serenity, and joy.

Such was the warfare with self in which the "good soldier" of Buddhism won his way at last to victory. Nine centuries after Gotama the great Commentator on the ancient Scriptures thus described his equipment :

"Converting uprightness into a cloak, and meditation into a breastplate, he covered mankind with the armour of religion, and provided them with the most perfect panoply. Bestowing on them memory as a shield and intellect as a sceptre, he conferred religion on them as the sword that vanquishes all that is incompatible with uprightness, investing them with the three wisdoms (*i.e.*, of the three great truths—viz., the impermanence of all things, the presence of sorrow, and the non-existence of a soul) as an ornament, and the fruits (of the Four Paths\*) as a tiara. He also bestowed on them the six branches of wisdom as a decoration such as flowers to be worn; assigning the Supreme Law to them as the white canopy of dominion which subdues the sins (of heresy); and procuring for them the consolation (of redemption from transmigration) which resembles a full-blown flower, he and his disciples attained Nirvana."<sup>†</sup>

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\* The conditions of (1) having entered the Stream, (2) returning only once more to earth, (3) being born again only once—viz., in heaven, (4) the perfected saint.

† From Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the *Buddhavamsa* (a poetical history of the Buddha's antecedents), tr. Turnour (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vii., p. 796).

The saint thus trained and aided is said to have destroyed the *āsavas*. Like other terms of moral and religious significance it bore a wide variety of meanings. We employ the word "spirits" to denote different kinds of alcoholic drinks, and varying psychological conditions, good and bad, high and low. Similarly *āsava* designated the intoxicating extract or secretion of a tree or flower, or the "intoxicants" which in the four-fold form of sensuality, the desire for re-birth, speculation, and ignorance, confused thought and feeling, darkened insight, and kept the mind in bondage to the senses.\* When all bonds were broken, all Hindrances surmounted, and the last of the Intoxicants, Ignorance, had been dispelled by Enlightenment, the aim of the long endeavour was achieved, the saint had "overcome the world." "Re-birth," he could say, "has been destroyed. The higher life has been fulfilled. What had to be done has been accomplished. After this present life there will be no beyond." This was emancipation, this brought "love, joy, peace."

Seated in the forest at the foot of a tree, on the hill-top, deep in a mountain glen, sheltered from the glare of the sun in a rocky cave, on

\* See the Pāli Text Society's *Pāli-Engl. Dict.*, edited by T. W. Rhys Davids and W. Stede.

a heap of straw in the open field, or among half-eaten remains in a charnel place, the saint realised his liberty. His heart was free, ill-will was purged away, and love remained. When the times of solitude and meditation ended and he returned to the community, he took his place in a true brotherhood. Not all, of course, were of equal attainment. Some were still hampered by greediness, others by pride or sloth. A sick monk, of no service to the fraternity, might be neglected. One day the Buddha, going round the sleeping-places with Ānanda, found a sick brother lying on the ground in his filth unable to stir. He bade Ānanda fetch water, himself washed the sufferer tenderly, and with Ānanda's help lifted him into bed. From the Indian point of view such aid from such a Being was an act of extraordinary condescension. A meeting of the brethren was called, and Gotama enquired why the invalid had been left unattended. "You have no fathers or mothers who might wait upon you. If you do not wait on one another, who will wait upon you? Whoever wants to wait upon me should wait upon the sick."\* But the saints lived in mutual concord and unity, earnest, zealous, and resolved, full of mutual acts of helpfulness. "How do you do it?" enquired

\* *S.B.E.* xvii., p. 240.

the Buddha of Anuruddha in the Eastern Bambu Park. "I practise love toward the brethren," he answered, "in thought, word, and deed, both openly and in secret. I give up my own will, and live only according to the will of the brethren. Our bodies, Lord, are different, but our minds, I think, have become one."\* The experience of the Sisters was the same. So Rohinī sang—

" From many a clan, and many a countryside  
They join the Order, mutually bound  
In love."

This deep affection was the theme of a fourfold Rapture. The saint had learned in his training to pervade the first quarter of the world with thoughts of Love, and then the second, third, and fourth. He embraced the whole sphere above, below, around, in the same love, far-reaching, measureless. Then in the midst of all the suffering rose Pity for every form of ill, Sympathy with all things that have life, and Equanimity which could bear the sight without quailing, confident in the means to end it. When Māra found the elder Tekicchakāri in the open field devoting himself to this high moral culture, he tempted him with advice to return to his lodge for shelter from the cold wintry nights. But the elder replied—

\* *S.B.E.* xvii., p. 311.

“ My heart transported shall reach out and touch  
The Four Immeasurable Moods : thereby  
Ever shall I in blissful ease abide.  
Not mine foredone by cold to fail, who dwell  
Unmoved and calm.”\*

The Buddhist ideal demanded an affection of the most vigilant tenderness—

“ E'en as a mother watcheth o'er her child,  
Her only child, as long as life doth last,  
So let us, for all creatures great or small,  
Develop such a boundless heart and mind,  
Ay, let us practise love for all the world,  
Above, below, around and everywhere,  
Uncramped, free from ill-will and enmity.”†

Two moments remained ineffaceable in the memory of the early saint—the gracious call of the Master which quickened the first insight, rousing the response of immediate endeavour, and the final attainment—perhaps in the third watch after a night of intense effort—when the gloom of remaining ignorance was burst asunder. That day the believer laid down a heavy burden. In the joyous sense of release the cry could not be repressed, “ O free indeed, O gloriously free am I.” Sitting upon a rocky peak with the mountain breezes blowing, the Sister felt the

\* *Psalms of the Brethren*, tr. Mrs. Rhys Davids, p. 209.

† *Sutta Nipāta*, vv. 149-50, tr. Mrs. Rhys Davids.

breath of liberty sweep over her: “Emancipation dawns, my heart is free.” It was the Light of Truth that thus brought freedom from craving, firmness, serenity, which Māra and his host could not disturb. “My heart,” cries another, “stands like a rock and swayeth not.” No danger without could arouse alarm. The storm which drove the bears and hyænas, the buffaloes and elephants of the forest to frenzy, could not affright the saint. “To me no fear comes nigh, no creeping dread, no quailing.” Death, of course, had no terrors—

“ And all unshaken in a shifting world  
My heart thus trained—whence shall come ill to me ? ”

Such was the issue of the long progress up the hill Difficulty. In the vast expanse opened to the vision of the purified heart there was a tranquil joy—

“ Happy I seek my rest,  
Happy I rise, happy I pass the day,  
Escaped from snare of evil—ah ! behold  
The Master’s sweet compassion shown to me.”

Such was the testimony of a famous bandit whom Gotama won back from his brutal ways.\* And not less significant was the testimony of the harlot Vimālā—

\* *Psalms of the Brethren*, p. 325.

“ Purged are the *Asavas* that drugged my heart,  
Calm and content I know Nibbāna’s Peace.”\*

Nibbāna, then, or in its better known Sanskrit form Nirvāna, is the condition of Buddhist holiness, the attainment of complete self-control and the knowledge and insight which were inseparably united with it. The word appears in Indian literature for the first time in Buddhist teaching. Whether Gotama found it already in use or coined it for his own purposes we cannot tell.† In form it is derived from a verb *nibbāti*, to “ go out,” in the sense in which a fire or a lamp goes out when no more fuel or oil is supplied to maintain the flame. A blazing bonfire, if no fresh dry grasses or faggots were thrown on it from time to time, would at last “ go out.” A burning lamp, if no one poured in more oil or adjusted the wick, would in the same way “ go out.”‡ What was the inner fire which man was for ever feeding

\* *Psalms of the Sisters*, p. 53.

† The word is found in a verse recited by the Buddha, “ Health is the highest thing to get, Nibbāna is the highest bliss,” in conversation with a Wanderer, who remarks that he has heard his teachers and their teachers also recite it. But in our ignorance of the way in which the discourses were put together this solitary reference can hardly establish a definite usage.

‡ *Kindred Sayings* ii., p. 59 ff., tr. Mrs. Rhys Davids.

with fresh fuel, the flame on which he constantly poured more nourishment?

Early in his ministry Gotama was involved in a curious rivalry with an ascetic wearing matted hair, who was devoted to a special form of fire-worship. The ascetic was outdone by a display of wonders, and with a thousand fellow-worshippers, all duly converted, accompanied Gotama to Gayā-Head. There on the hillside as he looked over the great prospect, the villages and homesteads and fields, he moralised on the subject of fire. "Everything is on fire," he declared, "eye, ear, tongue, body, mind—all burn."\* Nay, the whole world, he exclaimed elsewhere, was in flames. It was a favourite image. Through all experience ran this heat of craving; unsatisfied longing continually kindled fresh efforts to secure satisfaction, and they all produced the weary round of birth and death, grief, lamentation, despondency, and despair. In each sensation was generated a glow of unworthy desire; if it was painful, to get rid of it; if it was pleasurable, to get more of it. It burned with the flame of lust or greed, of ill-will or hate, of dulness or ignorance, want of alertness, feebleness of insight. Conquer passion, overcome malevolence, clear the mental view, and the fire

\* *S.B.E.* xiii., p. 134.

of craving would go out. The saint would know that he was free from all bonds. "Cool am I now, knowing Nibbāna's Peace," is the frequent refrain in the songs of the Emancipated, both men and women. Such deliverance was the essence which flavoured the whole Teaching. The victor in life's warfare stood like the Buddha himself, while still in the body, a spectacle to gods and men. But when the body could hold together no longer, the tie to existence would be broken like a bunch of mangoes whose stalk had been cut, and neither gods nor men would see him more.

Was that really the end? It was a question which was often asked. The curious in other sects had their stock puzzles to which they demanded answers. Was the world finite or infinite in space and time? Would the saint who had reached truth exist after death, or would he not? Or would he both exist and not exist, or neither exist nor not exist? And the Buddha would decline to answer. His silence sometimes provoked a charge of ignorance. "Did I ever promise to tell you?" he would answer; and he would explain that these things had no real moral significance; they did not lead to purification from lusts, tranquillity of heart, real knowledge, higher insight. "Let that which I have not

revealed remain unrevealed." So he withdrew the problems from attention; such speculations were unprofitable for holiness; they disturbed thought and generated hasty tempers, wranglings, and disputes. Yet he told an enquirer that the perfected saint was emancipated from all reckoning by material form, he was deep, immeasurable as the Great Ocean. The King of Kosāla fell in with a nun renowned for her wisdom while on a journey from one town to another, and propounded the common question. She gave the Buddha's answer, and the king asked why the fact had not been revealed. "Have you an accountant or treasurer," she replied, "who could tell you how many grains there are in the sands of the Ganges, or how many measures of water in the Great Ocean?"\* The Buddha and the saint who had attained perfect holiness like him had passed out of the world of change; the predicates of our existence applied to them no more; if there was anything beyond, it lay outside our comprehension.

The poets, accordingly, sang of those who had crossed the endless stream of birth, death, and re-birth, which flowed on bearing the myriads of conscious beings on its course. There was indeed an island, liberated from the three "Somethings"—greed, ignorance, dulness—free from all attach-

\* Cp. Oldenberg, *Buddha* (Engl. tr., 1882), p. 278.

ments; there was a further shore, steadfast, imperishable, which no storms could shake. Here there was no vicissitude. Nirvāna belonged to the transcendent order; like space it was simple, uncompounded. "For there is a sphere, brethren," said the Buddha, "where there is neither earth nor water, light nor air, neither infinity of space nor infinity of consciousness, nor nothingness, nor perception nor absence of perception, neither this world nor that world, both sun and moon. I call it neither coming nor going nor standing, neither motion nor rest, neither death nor birth. It is without stability, without procession, without a footing. That is the end of sorrow."\* This is the deathless, *Amata*, the realm of freedom which Gotama sought to proclaim to mankind. "I will beat the drum of *Amata*," he said as he first went to Benares, "in the darkness of this world." And to the urgency of the great Brahmā who had pleaded with him not to remain in silent enjoyment of the Truth won with such long exertion, he had replied, "Wide open is the door of the Deathless to all who have ears to hear; let them send forth faith to meet it."†

Faith was indeed the first demand of a Teacher

\* *The Udāna*, tr. Strong (1902), p. 111.

† Deathless, not in our sense immortal, because there was no re-birth. Cp. *S.B.E.* xiii., pp. 88, 91.

with so novel a message. Among those whom he addressed, however, there were men and women in every stage of moral backwardness or development. Under the magic of his personality the less advanced could only recognise in him a safe guide out of bewilderment and error, and surrender themselves to his call in simple trust. In others his appeal awoke an immediate response. They apprehended its meaning, they saw its scope, with direct and sudden vision. In Buddhist phrase they gained "the pure and spotless Eye of the Truth." And to their surprise they found that this Truth which revealed them to themselves as plunged in Ill, was nevertheless beautiful. In its austere vindication of the fundamental Order of the world, in its assurance that for every moral wrong there was a moral remedy, in its unswerving confidence that no endeavour after right was without fruit, in its presentation of purity, love, and knowledge as the only goal worth seeking, it was—in the oft repeated phrase—"lovely in its origin, lovely in its progress, and lovely in its consummation." But this Truth was not Gotama's private or personal discovery. It was not fetched out of a world of incessant change. It had no home in the stream of lives that flowed on for ever. Behind Gotama himself there were other Buddhas.

They stretched in endless procession back through countless ages. And they had all had the same vision and proclaimed the same Truth. In other words, it belonged to the world of the unborn, the unoriginated, the uncompounded, like the mystery of Nirvāna. When Gotama was dying he told his disciples that the Truth should still be their Teacher. He was called "Truth-bodied," and they, who styled themselves "Sons of the Blessed One," were "Truth-born." The monk might be a hundred leagues away (or a hundred years after him), but if he had conquered greed and ill-will, if he were mindful and self-composed, they would still be near each other. How so? "Because he who sees the Truth, sees me." Whence, then, came this capacity of insight? At first it was ascribed to the good conditions resulting from virtue in some earlier life. But in the evolution of experience and doctrine it was perceived that if the Truth possessed an eternal value, so did the Buddha; and the consciousness which could apprehend it must in some way share the same nature, however its vision might be veiled by indifference or darkened by sin.\*

The teaching of Gotama thus rested on funda-

\* Cp. Chapter IV., p. 255, and compare "partakers of the divine nature," 2 Peter i. 4.

mental facts in human nature. Those whose hearts were not pure enough to realise it at once would learn by the needful discipline to verify it in their own experience. The Brāhmans might allege a divine origin for the Veda, and present religion and the social order as ordained in heaven. Ethics, like theology and ritual, was founded on Revelation. In the enthusiasm of life "in Spirit" the first Christian believers framed no theories and worked out no moral schemes. They had before them a supreme Example, and teachers who showed them how to follow it. But in taking over the Hebrew Scriptures from the Synagogue they provided themselves with an authority to which Jesus had himself appealed; and when the "Words of the Lord" were ranked with them and books of the New Covenant were placed beside those of the Old, a large body of ethical instruction was established in the Church. No attempt indeed was made at first to systematise it. The Beatitudes do not rest on an analysis of the constituents of a human being; the Pauline lists of virtues and vices are independent of any doctrine of their relation to the metaphysics of a chain of causation. The Founder of Christianity speaks like prophet and psalmist from the height of immediate insight into divine things, with a

richer sense of filial dependence on the Father in heaven. But he lays out no scheme of duties. He is bold enough to summon the men and women whose life he has shared to imitate the perfection of God. He throws out a tremendous challenge, but he trusts those who "have ears to hear" themselves to "judge what is right." He plants himself on universal spiritual facts which will be as true in the "age which is to come" as in that "which now is," the capacity of man to find out God's will and to do it.

The Church could not maintain itself at that elevation. Confronted with a life of greater variety of trial than beset the first community at Jerusalem, it had to lay down rules, first for those who sought admission, and then for those who violated its standards of behaviour. Christian teaching gradually assumed the aspect of a new Law. It was enforced by tremendous sanctions, the bliss of heaven, and the pains of hell. The authority of the Church, exercised by its accredited ministers, became supreme. Lists of offences were provided with appropriate penances, and excommunication carried with it an eternal doom. Ambrose might borrow from Cicero, and bring the four cardinal virtues into Christian morality. Aquinas might recognise "natural virtues" and adopt Aristotle's division

of them into intellectual and moral. But much popular Christianity rested on conceptions of a more or less legal kind. Over against the lofty mysticism which had drawn rare thinkers into the succession of Plato and Plotinus, and flowered in the practice of the love of God "for himself," common conduct was often regulated by conceptions of merit, and the discharge of duty became an insurance for safety and happiness hereafter. That taint lurked in the schemes founded on the doctrine of "total depravity." The Church of England still declares in its 13th Article that "works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his spirit are not pleasant to God, and have the character of sin; for the nature of every man born into this world is corrupt, and therefore deserves God's wrath and damnation." The Cambridge Platonists might plead that there were eternal principles of morality accessible as truths of reason, not constituted by any creative act of God. Paley, however, had no hesitation in basing ethics exclusively on Revelation. "Virtue"—so ran his famous definition—"is the doing good to mankind in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness." This avowed object certainly confined its pursuer within the "bonds" of self-interest from which it was the aim of Buddhism to liberate

the traveller along the Noble Path. But English ethical investigation had been fairly established in psychology. The discovery of different values among the springs of action in human nature relieved theology of a burden greater than it could bear. The virtues of antiquity were no longer condemned as "splendid sins." No one now would dismiss the Buddha, or his contemporary Confucius, to the society of the Devil. The authority of conscience, for those who could not recognise it as a mere social product or the casual issue of an evolutionary process, carried with it something transcendent and divine. It speaks prophetically, as in the name of the Lord, and opens the way to communion between man and his Maker.

Christian ethics, therefore, can never, like primitive Buddhism, leave God out of account. New fields of duty are at once disclosed, and new sources of power are revealed. The relation of sonship to so august a Being awakens fresh affections, and calls forth energies hitherto unrealised. The range of religious experience is immeasurably widened. Instead of painfully struggling with bare rules of morality, the disciple finds commands turned into privileges, and the endurance of hardness lightened by trust. Gratitude to the Giver of all good, reverence before

the infinitely Holy, humility in the presence of boundless Wisdom, sorrow for the sin that wounds eternal Love, aspiration after the divine Likeness—all these aspects of spiritual emotion were unknown to the early Buddhist. The Law of the Deed might become a source of terror to the evildoer when once compelled to realise his guilty past. And the unselfish saint who devoted himself to the solemn purpose of attaining Buddhahood for the enlightenment of the world, knew that he could rely on it to secure him at the **goal** if he could unweariedly fulfil the labours which the agelong course of self-discipline required.\* To such a power he might look at once with awe and confidence. But it gave him no guidance; it healed no hurt, pardoned no transgression. He walked with no divine Helper who first wrought in him that which he could then work out.

## VI

Buddhist morality has often been charged with selfishness because its avowed aim was to make an end of suffering. For those who only practised its common virtues, reward and punishment were held out with promises and threats after the fashion of popular Christianity. Heaven and hell were realities in both creeds, though Indian

\* See below, pp. 183, 187.

imagination never conceived the horror of everlasting torments. The advanced disciple, however, as he trod the Noble Path, ceased to regulate his conduct either by the hope of the one or the fear of the other. It has been said that his one aim in life was to escape from it. But the conquest of passion, the realisation of universal love, and the clearance of the inward vision, would not shorten his appointed years on earth by a single hour. The Buddha himself must endure the pangs of sickness uncomplainingly. Only he suffered no re-birth. If there was anything that the world of change, the stream of cause and effect, could no longer hold, it passed beyond human ken into the realm of the Unborn. The whole force of Buddhist ethic was thus concentrated on the cultivation of character. When Jesus declared that the tree was known by its fruit, when Paul asserted that a man would reap what he sowed, they laid hold of the same fundamental truths of the moral life, though they applied them to a different conception of the government of the world. The Buddha's aim was to organise human effort for the attainment of knowledge and virtue. It is quite true that this was presented under the form of release from the liability to be re-born. But re-birth and its attendant ill in the sphere of the com-

posite and impermanent were the result of egoism still unsubdued—in other words, of ignorance and sin. The negative aspect of the arrest of the causal chain by which the production of another individual would be prevented had for its positive counterpart the achievement of complete purity and unclouded insight in thought, word, and deed. This was the ideal held up to the disciple. The Buddha's City of Righteousness, said the venerable Nāgasena to King Milinda, “has righteousness for its rampart, the fear of sin for its moat, knowledge for its battlement over the city-gate, and zeal for the watch-tower above that, faith for the pillars at its base, mindfulness for the watchman at the gate, and wisdom for the terrace above.”\* Is it to be supposed that its inhabitants only came there to die?

Thought, emotion, will, thus had their several disciplines in the Noble Path. Like Jesus, Gotama threw the whole stress on inward conditions. Formalism of any kind in place of real sincerity was odious to him. He looked on the pretensions of Brāhmans much as Jesus looked on the Pharisees, “What is the use of platted hair, O fool! what of the raiment of goat-skins? Within

\* “The Questions of King Milinda” (*S.B.E.* xxxvi., p. 212).

thee there is ravening, but the outside thou makest clean.”\* But the anger of Gotama never flamed out like Christ’s. The ascetic might be ignorant and stupid, but he was not a hypocrite. Fasting and nakedness, the tonsure and dirt, penances and sacrifice, could bring no purification to a man who had not conquered his passions or mastered his doubts. Taking life and stealing, falsehood and fraud, anger and envy, sensual indulgence, mercilessness and pride, “these are the things that defile, but not the eating of flesh.” The root of all ill lay in egotism. “‘He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me’—in those who harbour such thoughts hatred will never cease. For hatred does not cease by hatred at any time, hatred ceases by love. This is an old rule.”† Gotama appeals to the highest experience of the past, much as Jesus does, “for this is the law and the prophets.” The Christian maxim of universal benevolence was early formulated in a positive form. One day, so ran the story, the King of Kosala asked his queen whether any one was dearer to her than the Self, the universal Presence immanent (according to Brahmanical doctrine) in the world and man. The lady answered

\* *Dhammapada*, xxvi. 394.

† *Ibid.*, i. 3-5.

that the Self was dearer to her than all else. The king agreed and reported the conversation afterwards to the Buddha. Gotama replied by taking, as he often did, the position of his interlocutor, and drawing a lesson from it :

“ The whole wide world we traverse with our thought,  
Nor come on aught more dear to each than Self,  
Since aye so dear the Self to other men,  
Let the Self-lover harm no other man.”\*

Brahmanical philosophy would have all creatures loved by each as manifestations of the same immanent Godhead. Buddhism viewed them as involved in common Ill, and consequently needing help, comfort, and deliverance. *Dāna*, “giving” or charity, was the first theme of his preaching on lay-folk’s duties. The service of others in want or trouble was a universal call. The monk, who owned nothing but his robes, his alms-bowl, his water-strainer, and a few such minor requisites, had no material aids to bestow. But a more precious gift was in his power. He could impart the Truth.† To teach, to lead others along the Noble Path, to bring those who sat in darkness into the light, was the first demand on his knowledge, his energy, and his affection.

\* *Udāna*, p. 47, tr. Mrs. Rhys Davids, in Hastings’ *E.R.E.* v., p. 235.

† This was known as *Dhamma-dāna*.

Here was the impulse that inspired the great Buddhist missions,<sup>8</sup> derived from the lifelong example of Gotama himself. According to Jewish Christian tradition the disciples of Jesus were at first bidden (Matt. x. 5, 6, 23) to confine their message to their own people. The urgency was so great, the arrival of the Son of Man so near, that there would not be time to proclaim the approach of the Kingdom even to all the cities of Israel. Samaritans and Gentiles must learn the good news later. Yet Jesus healed a Roman officer's servant, and pictured throngs coming from the east and west to feast at the great banquet with the patriarchs, though the expectant heirs had forfeited their claims to admission. Christianity started, like Buddhism, with universalism at its core.

In offering his method as a Middle Way between worldliness and self-mortification Gotama created in the existing scene a dual standard of conduct. In the early days some hearers became saints while still laymen. But the path to holiness could not be traversed among the occupations and interests of common life. The monk must be suitably dressed to protect him from cold, and fed to maintain the health needed for inward concentration. Rags from a dunghill would make sufficient garments if no wealthy donor provided

them; and food was to be got by the daily round from house to house if there was no invitation to dinner. In the forest solitude there were berries and roots. The rule of a single meal sufficed for nourishment, and ascetic practices of fasting were forbidden. Early Christianity did not recognise the distinction which monasticism afterwards discovered in the language of Jesus to the rich young man, "If thou wouldest be perfect." Philosophy, however, had created its own disciplines, like the Pythagorean. The Cynic as well as the Hindu *sannyāsin* slept upon the ground, and while the Buddhist was allowed three robes he wore but one. The Pharisee fasted twice a week, and the practice was continued, though on different days, in the Church. All kinds of avocations, of amusements, of civic duties, were entangled in idolatry, and from these the Christian was bound to hold aloof. In face of the approaching end of the age accumulations of wealth were needless, though none had a right to call on others to maintain him; it was a wholesome rule that "he that will not work, neither shall he eat." The continuance of the race ceased to be the satisfaction either of individual passion or of social demand. Paul recommended the unmarried not to marry, and the married to live as if unmarried. There were

spiritual unions in which the two sexes dwelt together in rigid continence. Upon Mount Zion the Lamb was seen surrounded by one hundred and forty-four thousand virgins who had not defiled themselves with women. The gift of the Spirit called for strict restraint upon the flesh. Such a type of life offered a vehement challenge to common practice, and, when associated with bitter threats of everlasting doom upon the unconverted, drew down upon itself the fierce counter-charge of hatred of the human race. With the decline of the old religions and the fall of the Empire of the West, the Christian Church became the heir of the authority of Rome, and entered the field of international politics. No such opportunity or temptation ever fell in the way of Buddhism. Sovereigns might befriend and promote it, but though its factions might engage (as in Japan) in armed strife, it was at no period strong enough or united enough under single leadership to produce a Hildebrand or an Innocent III. Amid wide variations of doctrine it remained truer to its original ideal. It never promoted wars like the popes who made crusades part of their foreign policy, or claimed to be the source and guide of civil power. When the Chinese had destroyed a Buddhist temple in the Boxer rising at the begin-

ning of this century, six leading denominations in Japan united in requesting their government to inflict no reprisals and demand no compensation.

Among the attainments of the Buddhist saint were certain mystic states, or "Raptures," in which the common consciousness was gradually purified by successive abstractions till it suspended all power of self-direction. Rising above joy, tranquillity, the destruction of all passion, into perfect intellectual and moral poise, the aspirant dwelt successively on the infinity of space alone, and then only on the infinity of thought. When these themes were discarded and all special objects were thus banished, he passed into a stage between consciousness and unconsciousness, until all self-direction was suspended and the last traces of sensation and ideas disappeared. These were successive conditions of "Release." On the last night of the Buddha's life he was piously believed to have reached this exalted height. It seemed to Ananda that the Master was dead. But he returned by the same path of descent, and when he once more realised the fourth Rapture in the absolute balance of complete knowledge and complete holiness he passed away.

When Christianity was first interpreted in

terms of philosophy eternal life was presented in the form of knowledge. The Apostle Paul, indeed, had warned the Corinthians against its dangerous tendency to "puff up" its possessor, but on the plane of Johannine thought it was the privilege of fellowship with the Father and the Son who came and made their abode with the believer. Not till the Church had drawn into itself a thinker familiar at once with the training of the schools and the mysterious vision of the rites of Eleusis was any attempt made to lay out a path to this high *Gnosis*. Clement of Alexandria was no psychological analyst of the Buddhist type. He did not number the phases of the soul's ascent towards the supernal Light. But he had seen it and he knew how it could be found. It had one root in the investigation of the First Cause and the constitution of the universe, and thus possessed a scientific character. It was fed by the study of man, his nature and powers, and grew out of ethics. But it rose above both the world and humanity into the sphere of Spirit.

" For the knowledge of insight is so to speak a kind of perfection of man as man, harmonious and consistent with itself and with the divine word . . . for it is said ' to him that hath shall be added,' knowledge added to faith, and love to knowledge, and to love the

heavenly inheritance. This takes place when anyone hangs upon the Lord by means of faith and knowledge and love, and ascends up with him in the presence of the God and Guardian of our faith and love, who is the ultimate source from which knowledge is imparted to those who are fitted and approved for it. . . . This knowledge leads us on to that perfect end which knows no end, teaching us here the nature of the life we shall hereafter live with gods according to the will of God . . . . Hence, too, it easily transplants a man to that divine and holy state which is akin to the soul, and by a light of its own carries him through the mystic stages, till it restores him to the crowning abode of rest, having taught the pure in heart to look upon God with understanding and absolute certainty.”\*

That is the reflective Greek way. Here is the more impassioned utterance of the father of Latin mysticism, Augustine. Every reader of the *Confessions* will recall the description of his conversations with his mother shortly before her death as they waited for a ship at Ostia. Above the purest pleasure of the senses, light, they rose together stage by stage through the very heavens in admiration of the divine works, until they came to the marvel of their own minds, and then

\* *Miscellanies* vii. 56, 57 (tr. Hort and Major). On the use of the term “ gods ” for believers as made immortal by baptism, cp. Carpenter, *Phases of Early Christianity* (1915), p. 56 *ff.* “ To look upon God ” = *ἐποπτεύειν*, a Greek mystery word.

went beyond them to that region where life was the Wisdom whereby all these things were made.

“ And we were saying—

“ If to any the tumult of the flesh were hushed, hushed the images of earth, and waters, and air, hushed also the poles of heaven, yea the very soul be hushed to herself, and by not thinking on self surmount self, hushed all dreams and imaginary revelations, every tongue and every sign, and whatever exists only in transition, since if any could hear, all these say, ‘ We made not ourselves, but He made us that abideth for ever ’—If then having uttered this, they too should be hushed, having roused only our ears to Him who made them, and He alone speak, not by them but by Himself . . . as we two now strained ourselves, and in swift thought touched on that Eternal Wisdom which abideth over all;—could this be continued on, and other visions of kind far unlike be withdrawn, and this one ravish and absorb and wrap up the beholder amid these inward joys, so that life might be for ever like that one moment of understanding which now we sighed after—were not this ‘ Enter thou into thy Master’s joy? ’ ”\*

Only rare souls could ascend such heights. In a few generations Buddhists ceased to attain these altitudes of Release; and Christian devotion must run an unilluminated course for centuries before it was ripe for the quickening contest of philosophy and the teaching of Bernard, Aquinas,

\* *Confessions* ix. 24, 25 (Oxford tr.).

and Dante. The paths of development lay along other lines. Before the disciple of the Buddha stood the exalted figure of the Teacher; the Christian knelt at the feet of the Saviour. At the head of those who toiled laboriously along the Noble Way the Buddha had marched as a high-priest of wisdom, initiating them into knowledge and virtue, and telling them, like Plato, that the prize was great. The Christian saw his Redeemer on the cross, offering his life for the salvation of the world. As imaginative piety retraced the antecedent history of Gotama, it boldly pictured the moment of the great resolve to gain supreme Enlightenment for the sake of men and gods in a distant æon, and told of the effort prolonged through many ages in the untiring practice of the Ten Perfections by which the victory was won at last.\* What sacrifices had he not made, what an accumulation of ill had he not borne, that he might open the road to truth and good! Whatever was being suffered by those whom he addressed he, too, had suffered. Whatever labours of self-discipline he laid on them, he had himself again and again fulfilled. Here was an example of stimulating power, which generated in Buddhism its missionary zeal, and finally produced a new type

\* See Chapter III., p. 188.

of saintship, under a divine Teacher, in a living Church. Christian imagination, daring enough on the apocalyptic scene, did not venture into such detail of the past. It was enough for Paul in one great leap of thought to pass beyond the limits of history, and conceive its whole course as already known in the eternal purpose—creation's first hour, Adam's opportunity and fall, the patriarch's faith, the vicissitudes of Israel under the Law—while the Son of God, sharing the Father's glory, awaited patiently the hour of his mission, when he should humble himself to a malefactor's death. How immeasurable was the love of the Father for mankind in sending him forth, how boundless the condescension of the Son who thus gave himself. The Buddha showed what humanity could achieve. He was presented as superior to the gods, even to Brahmā himself. Insight and holiness were united in him. He was no Egyptian Sphinx satisfied without knowledge, in immovable calm. His was the peace of conquered passion, disciplined will, and clarified vision. Of Christ as of the Buddha it could be said that whoso saw him saw the Truth. But the devotion of the Church was less interested in the scenes of his manhood than in the two extremes of his career—as a babe in the manger, and crucified between

two thieves. Each figure offered a supreme testimony to the worth of human nature. But their scale of values was different. The one represented man's capacity to effect his own deliverance; the other what God was willing to do to rescue him from his own impotence. And the Church which has exercised the widest influence in history has heightened the significance of the divine self-sacrifice by declaring it to be bloodlessly repeated day by day upon ten thousand altars round the world. No follower of Gotama ever wrote an "Imitation" on the basis of the Master's life. But the essential idea was not lacking. The Christian could only kneel in adoration before the presence of his Lord in the mystery of the Eucharist. He might humbly follow him in works of mercy and service, and missions to the unconverted, but he could only assist in the saving of the lost by applying the benefits of an atonement which had been accomplished once for all. And for those who refused them or never received an offer of them, no fresh opportunity would ever be vouchsafed. The Buddhist was taught to prepare himself to take his part in the great aim of Universal Deliverance.

## VII

Compassion for the world, for its ills, its ignorance, and sin, had called Gotama into the field as Teacher. Like Jesus he felt an immense pity for suffering. The shadows of change and mortality enveloped even the gods, and for them, too, the knowledge of the Truth must be a gain. To spread it thus became the immediate duty of the disciple. Not only within the community must the trained Elder instruct the young novice; he must carry the message of deliverance far and wide and, as he had nothing else to give, he must freely proclaim the Buddha's Word. The call to holiness often roused bitter opposition. The monk looked round him thinking, "Having learned myself, whom shall I teach?" But could he bear ridicule or persecution from those who did not want to learn? To live happily in an atmosphere of scorn or hatred was not easy. No religious or imperial authorities were there to inflict the synagogue's scourge or the lictor's rod; but abuse was cheap, clods were handy for throwing, a blow from a stout stick or pike would silence the defenceless preacher. Could he endure in silence like an elephant facing a storm of arrows in battle? The real driver, said Gotama, holds back anger like

a rolling chariot, other people only hold the reins; “let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil with good.” When a Brāhman mocked at the silence of Brahmadatta, son of the King of Kosāla, who sought alms of food as a devout monk heedless of jeers and gibes, the prince only replied :

“ Who doth not, when reviled,  
Revile again, a twofold victory wins.  
Both of the other and himself he seeks  
The good.”

The Brāhman was moved by the sight of gentleness under provocation, besought forgiveness, and learned within the Order from the object of his derision the practice of meditation on love towards others.\*

If Buddhism had its martyrs, the Order kept no calendar of their names and dates. But their spirit was not wanting. When Punna asked the Buddha’s permission to go and preach to the Sunas (? Huns), he was warned that he must be prepared for obloquy and blows, he might be stoned or killed. He only replied, “ I shall say to myself—there are disciples who go forth loathing and despising the body and life, to seek the weapons of destruction; now, without seeking,

\* *Psalms of the Early Buddhists*, p. 223.

I have found them." The missionary braved hostility as fearlessly as the perils of travel. He traversed vast forests with no food but roots and berries on the way; he crossed rivers, he climbed mountain passes; the tiger or the snake, the bandit or the demon, might make an end of him, but others would follow without fail, for when the world's welfare was concerned (said the Chronicler) who could be slothful or indifferent? How many went forth during the lifetime of Gotama, and how far east and west and north and south they carried the Truth, no records tell. But in the two centuries which followed his death (? in 483) their successors had wandered over a large part of Northern India, and under Asoka (274-237 B.C.) a great burst of imperial zeal sent the heralds of the Noble Path far beyond the limits of the peninsula. In the edicts which were engraved on rocks and pillars in various localities throughout his dominions, he explained the principles of his policy and confessed his faith.\*

\* In the volume on *Asoka* ("Rulers of India Series"), by Mr. Vincent Smith, or the chapter describing his reign in the Cambridge *History of India*, vol. i. (contributed by Dr. F. W. Thomas), full information will be found. The dates given above are those of Dr. Thomas. The variations in the computations of other scholars do not affect the general facts.

The tragedies involved in his campaign against the people of Kalinga in the ninth year of his reign made a deep impression on him.\* He became a lay disciple of the Order, and two and a half years later was actually admitted as a member. Its influence on his policy was immediately apparent. He embraced with ardour the duty of giving the alms of the Truth. For hunting expeditions and pleasure tours he substituted journeys of instruction. The physical and moral welfare of his subjects was his constant care. Wells were dug by the roads, medical aid was provided for man and beast, the slaughter of animals for food or festivals was severely restricted. He constantly proclaimed the duty of goodwill among all classes; religious toleration was emphatically enjoined; Brāhmans and ascetics and sects of various kinds were all included in his constant benevolence. His incessant activity stimulated them into more efficient organisation; and he instituted circuits every five years when prominent officials were sent round through his dominions to expound social and religious duty in addition to their regular functions. Special portions of Buddhist teaching were publicly commended for study. He promoted the erection of sacred shrines—

\* Cp. Chapter I., p. 16.

tradition ascribed to him the conventional number of 84,000—and he made a pilgrimage to the reputed place of Gotama's birth in the Lumbini garden, where he reared a memorial pillar which was discovered in 1896. Above all he brought practically all India into the scope of his missions, including not only the southern Tamils but the wild tribes of forests and hills. To Ceylon he sent his own son Mahinda. Eminent teachers were despatched to Kashmir and Gandhāra, to the Himālaya, and the "Golden Land" in the farther East. Most interesting is Asoka's claim to have sent "envoys" (were they ambassadors or missionaries?) to Hellenic kings in Syria, Egypt, Cyrene, Macedonia, and Epirus. Nothing is known of such visitors from the Greek side. Is their enumeration more than an Oriental flourish? At any rate, it is likely that such preachers made their way to Bactria, and opened up the route through Central Asia to China, where there seem traces of Buddhist entry before 200 B.C. The great expansion had begun, and Buddhism was launched on its career as a universal religion.

The moral culture prescribed for the members of the Order implied a life of continuous tension, and it was soon found needful to make provision for its maintenance and impose remedies for its

violation. From ancient times the phases of the moon when it was new or full had gathered ceremonial observances about them; and various heretical sects followed Brahmanical practice in meeting at the middle and the close of every half month, on the eighth and fifteenth days, for public religious teaching. The King of Magadha, Bimbisāra, who had become a lay disciple of the Buddha, ventured to recommend the practice to Gotama. Tradition thus ascribed the practice of periodic meetings of members of the Order to a royal suggestion. In adopting it Gotama was believed to have ordained it at fortnightly intervals, and imparted to it a special character. It became the occasion for mutual confession, by which the brethren relieved themselves of offences against the Rule. This ceremony was known as the recital of the "Disburdenment," a list of formal transgressions and acts of unseemly behaviour.\* The monks of any given district were bound to provide a suitable assembly hall; seats must be properly arranged, and food collected for those who arrived from a distance. When evening came and the lamp or torch was lighted, the brethren assembled, and a duly trained elder opened the proceedings

\* In the Pāli canon it includes 227 rules. Cp. *S.B.E.* xiii., pp. x. and 1 *ff.*

by reminding them that each rule would be repeated three times; anyone guilty of violating it should confess it; silence would imply that their reverences were pure; failure to acknowledge a remembered transgression would involve an intentional falsehood which would effectually prevent attainment of any of the higher states. Four vows had been imposed at ordination, when the postulant undertook not to destroy a human life, not to commit unchastity, not to steal, and not to proclaim the possession of advanced insight untruly. A breach of any of these vows—except in the last case through undue self-confidence—would involve expulsion from the community. A long list of minor offences aimed at securing gentle and decorous behaviour, simplicity of life, toleration, and goodwill. Quarrels about procedure must be restrained; abusive language, slander, falsehood, blows, were of course forbidden. No one must take a woman's hand, and the conditions of travel with a Sister of the Order were carefully regulated. The proper size of bedstead, mat, or robe, must be duly observed, and decent habits in collecting alms of food must be rigidly maintained—“Not with envious thoughts will I look at others' bowls.” Disputatiousness and love of good eating were sore temptations to the undisciplined.

For such offences various periods of probation were prescribed. No priestly absolution was offered, none could be sought. For each unworthy act the Law of the Deed had its own penalties. A human institution might protect itself by human means. But it could not arrest the course of moral causation which watched unsleeping over the decline or the advance of character.

The process of thought and the development of usage in the Christian Church were very different. The first disciples conceived the future in terms of the sharpest distinction between heaven and hell. The candidate for baptism might have been drunken and dissolute; when he passed into the holy fellowship he became a “new man”; Christ was formed in him, he was “risen with Christ,” he was already seated in “the heavenlies”; or, with a change of metaphor, he was “born out of God,” and the august claim was made that in virtue of this fresh parentage he could sin no more. Yet the old habits were only imperfectly overcome, the old transgressions reappeared. There was no Church-law by which to deal with offenders. Before receiving the sacred food the congregation must purify itself by general confession. But what if those who had been “washed”

became again unclean? A hundred years after Jesus had passed away the Roman Hermas saw the Church invaded by all kinds of gross and sordid sin. There had always been in the dark background a mysterious "sin unto death." For grave offences after baptism no further atonement could be made, no forgiveness was possible. The Shepherd-angel was authorised to announce to Hermas one more opportunity of repentance. But from this apostates, blasphemers, and those who betrayed God's servants, were still excluded.

Little by little primitive rigour was relaxed, and a discipline of penance was established. It was a proof of the firm hold which Church authority had acquired that men were willing to seek reinstatement by public confession, kneeling to the brethren, and even rolling at their feet in sackcloth and ashes with fasting and tears. The evolution of the hierarchy finally placed the salvation of the believer in the control of the bishop. It was of course impossible for him to guarantee it, but he could frustrate it. The readmission of the "lapsed" or the adulterer did not anticipate the final judgment at the last Day; but it did place him within the possibility of a favourable award. The divine mercy might be extended to him, and the certainty of damnation was removed. But excommunication meant

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eternal doom. For the impenitent sinner there was no opportunity of subsequent repentance. The lot of the offender whom the bishop had refused to receive back into communion could never be reversed. Such was the position which emerged from the episcopate of Cyprian at Carthage (A.D. 248-258). It dominated Latin Christendom all through the Middle Ages. Out of canons laid down by councils and bishops elaborate lists of penances were compiled to guide the clergy whose duty it was to hear confessions. Such in this country were the Penitentials of St. David and Gildas in the sixth century, and the widely used work of Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury (A.D. 669-690), which for some four centuries secured great authority in the West. The shadow of sin brooded over all medieval devotion. The spiritual horror of it received its imperishable poetic expression in Dante's *Inferno*. Scholastic philosophy defined its nature, analysed its forms, and gave technical shape to the requirements and efficacy of penance. And finally in the sixteenth century the Council of Trent formally incorporated Penance into the sacraments of Catholic faith.

The goodwill which Gotama demanded of his followers naturally led to a wide toleration. As

Buddhism claimed no exclusive power to divide mankind into saved and lost, it was considerate of those who were outside its pale, and never anathematised differences of belief within it. When a distinguished Jain, Sīha, a general of the Licchavi clan, offered himself as a disciple, the Buddha bade him first reflect on what he was proposing. "If the other teachers had got me as their adherent," said he, "they would carry their banners round the whole city, proclaiming me as their follower." The further recommendation not to discontinue the provision of food to his former co-religionists surprised him still more, but was entirely in the spirit of the movement which he had just joined. Devadatta might attempt to secure the leadership, and found a rival Order, but Gotama felt towards it no hostility. Division of opinion about practice might be settled by quiet adjustment and general sanction, or if it infringed no principle might be left to personal choice. About a hundred years after the death of the Buddha some of the brethren at Vesali (the modern Besarh on the Gandak, north of Patna) wanted some money to provide utensils for the community, and when the laity assembled on the fortnightly Uposatha day, they put a copper pot in the midst of the meeting and asked for contributions. One of

the elders, however, protested that the monks were not allowed to receive money gifts, and when a portion of the collection was reserved and distributed that night among the members, he declined to receive his share. The incident aroused a great agitation. The Rule of the Order required absolute simplicity of life. It did not, like the great monasteries of Western Europe, acquire large estates with fields and orchards, serfs, horses, live stock. If piety prompted gifts of gold or silver, they were to be entrusted to a brother "free from desire, hate, infatuation, and fear," to be thrown away so that no sign should lead to its discovery. Even if this regulation were of later date, the monks at Vesali had transgressed the spirit which led to it. Consultations took place between distant members, east and west. At length a small committee of eight was appointed, four from each region. Among them was a venerable elder of immense age who was reputed to have known the Buddha's devoted companion, Ānanda.\* The multitude of his years was ascribed to his continuance in the practice of love. Finally a list of Ten Indulgences was submitted to the chosen Eight. They

\* Just as second-century Christians sought out those who were believed to have known the apostles and elders of the first.

concerned small points of daily practice, concluding with the right to accept money. On the testimony of the aged brother they were unanimously rejected, and this decision was subsequently confirmed by a council of 700 monks. In later times different versions of the Rule were in use in different schools of Buddhist teaching, but these variations never generated suspicion or ill-will.

Diversities of doctrine in like manner pursued their course side by side without antagonism. Gotama had himself only been one of a number of philosophic thinkers who appealed to a people like the men of Athens, always ready to hear some new thing. The love of enquiry and discussion could not be repressed among his followers. Respect was of course paid to age and learning, but there was no constituted authority for the definition or enforcement of belief, and beyond the elementary formula of adhesion to the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Order, there was no creed. It is justly said that of all religious orders mentioned in the history of religions Buddhism displayed the greatest variety and freedom of thought.\* Many themes on which the Founder had said nothing aroused interest and speculation. Others on which he is repre-

\* Prof. Rhys Davids, *Hastings' E.R.E.* xi. 307b.

sented to have expressed definite opinions, awoke equally definite opposition. Under the patronage of Asoka a great Council was held in Patna about the middle of the third century B.C. (? 253). The presiding Elder, named Tissa, brought forward a work containing a survey of some 200 questions on which diversities of opinion existed within the Order.\* The topics of discussion were psychological, ethical, metaphysical. In spite of the emphasis of Gotama on the principle of No-Self, it was affirmed by some that "there is a persisting personal entity." Against the empirical idealism of the early teaching it was affirmed that "everything exists," implying that there is an immediate perception of external objects. Could animals, it was asked, be re-born in heaven? The saint, it had been laid down, could not fall away. There were those who alleged that some previous Karma might still cause him to sin, as though a hidden determinism, working in secret, could outstrip personal control. New problems were suggested concerning the Buddha, revealing the growing demand for the elevation of his person which will be traced in the next chapter. But there was nothing to create rivalry or partisanship. No heat of temper marred the serenity

\* *Points of Controversy*, tr. S. Z. Aung and Mrs. Rhys Davids, 1915. This is the traditional view.

of the proceedings. On the elders chosen for the great missions no test of orthodoxy was imposed. At a later date the Chinese pilgrims found adherents of different schools in the same monastery, and professors of the humanitarian and theistic types of doctrine taught side by side in the great university of Nālandā.\*

The Buddha had passed away into the Great Deep, but the Teaching remained as a kind of Truth-body. Affection and piety longed for opportunities of expression, and after the solemn cremation and a seven-days' celebration of his death as his final victory over the world in the council-hall of the Mallas of Kusināra, it was decided to divide the remains and distribute them among the neighbouring clans. To his own Sākyan folk a portion was sent among others. In 1898 a large mound was opened near a village named Piprāhwā, about half a mile from the frontier of Nepal, between the sites of Kapilavastu, the scene of Gotama's youth, and the traditional place of his birth in the Lumbini garden. Within eighteen feet of solid brickwork was a massive coffer of hard fine sandstone, hollowed out of a solid block, weighing 1,429 lbs., with a lid of 408 lbs. It contained a number of steatite vases, a polished crystal

\* Cp. Chapter IV., p. 276.

bowl, and hundreds of ornaments of various kinds, pearls, gold leaves, flowers, stars, precious stones. One relic urn contained some minute pieces of bone, and bore an inscription declaring that it was the relic shrine of the blessed Buddha, belonging to his brethren the Sākyas, with their sisters, their children and their wives.\*

Similar mounds have been discovered elsewhere over relics of two of Gotama's most eminent disciples, sometimes called his right and left hands, Sāriputta and Moggallāna, who are said to have predeceased him, as well as of two of Asoka's distinguished missionaries, and Tissa, the president of his council.

Such mounds were not the only means of reverent commemoration. The Buddha's birth-place, the spot where he had attained complete Enlightenment, the deer-park at Benares where he had first proclaimed the Truths, the grove near Kusināra where he died, became the objects of devout pilgrimage. There were already popular devotions of this type, with their own sacred shrines, and the followers of Gotama adopted

\* The date of the Buddha's death is variously placed between 483 and 477 B.C. In 476 the bones of Theseus were brought from Scyros for deposition at Athens, and such relics became cult-objects at the sanctuaries of the Greek heroes.

the same practice. There was every reason for cultivating religious feeling by such acts of loving remembrance. Was he not the awakener of their inward vision, the healer of their pain, their deliverer from ill, their leader along the Noble Path, the perfect example of knowledge and holiness ! The flowers that were laid at the foot of memorial shrines raised in all kinds of places in simple homage were no more sacrifices than those which are laid on our warriors' graves. But they implied, argued King Milinda, in the language of critics of Buddhist usage, that the Teacher could not have passed away completely ; he must be still in some kind of union with this world, else would the honour paid to him be vain. The Pāli tradition would not allow it. He was beyond the believer's reach. It was well that he should be remembered and revered, but between him and his Order communion was possible no more.

Was this the last word of Buddhism for the world ? A remarkable development of faith took place which converted the greater number of its adherents into a Church.



**I**N the great procession of religions as they advance through history, some appear without leaders, while others can be traced back to specific persons. In the lower culture the origins of tribal practice and belief are veiled in obscurity. Sometimes a culture-hero emerges in the distant perspectives of imagination who has taught men arts and laws, and instituted simple rites of worship. Osiris was reputed to have imparted the principles of agriculture and founded the ceremonies of Egyptian religion. No single name, however, stands at the head of the long and complex developments of India or Greece. By what process the Vedic hymns were collected and made the corner stone of the vast and rambling edifice of Hindu faith, who initiated or who completed it, we shall never know. Hellenic piety might look back to Homer and Hesiod, but their poems found religion already in working order; they had no disciples; they created no religious communities. The traditions of Israel, on the other hand, referred the beginnings of the Law to Moses. The Zend Avesta has for its nucleus the hymns which claim to be

the composition of Zarathustra, and though the prophet cannot be assigned with certainty to any particular century, there is no reason to doubt the reality of his great movement of reform. Pythagoras, indeed, wrote nothing, but he established a discipline which held its own for centuries, and exercised immense influence on the higher Greek thought, though Pindar, who most nearly approached the exalted strains of Hebrew piety, could not unite his people in any common bond of faith.

## I

Buddhism and Christianity, like the last of the trio of the great missionary religions, Islam, sprang from great personalities, and through all their unexpected developments and transformations they have retained the impress of the ideas with which they started. Even where new types of philosophy have superseded the teaching of the historic Gotama, the fundamental aim of the deliverance of all beings from the world's entanglements of ignorance and sin remains unchanged. The Hindu mind, however, did not concern itself with definite records. The practice of royalty in the empires of Mesopotamia and Egypt was unknown. No court scribes composed registers of dynasties, or accounts of campaigns. Chronology was left to take care of

itself. Schools of philosophy might frame their lists of teachers, but they provided no dates, named no localities, wrote no biographies. The voluminous books of the early Buddhist canon contain abundant detail of Gotama's method of teaching; they give a fairly credible account of the foundation of the Order to which its propagation was entrusted; they gather up the memories of the last three months of his old age. But of the intervening years of his career —longer than the whole life of Jesus—they attempt no consecutive description; and of the intellectual and moral process which led up to his supreme Enlightenment beneath the famous tree at Gayā they preserve only a few scattered reminiscences attributed to Gotama himself. The Gospel narratives are briefer still, and their silences are yet more baffling. What was it that led Jesus to the Jordan among the crowds that listened to the Baptist's pregnant words? A handful of anecdotes in Mark, little groups of parables and sayings, some early reduced to written form, others gathered from unknown sources of recollection, make up the immortal picture, fitted into secular history by the trial under Pilate, and the elaborate series of synchronisms with which Luke ushers in the appearance of the ascetic preacher of repentance. But the Gospels, as is

well known, do not agree among themselves concerning the length of Jesus' ministry. The Fourth Gospel extends it over three passovers; the First Three name but one, that at which he suffered. They differ about important incidents like the expulsion of the money-changers from the temple, or the day and the character of the farewell supper. Such variations, though they naturally perplex the student, do not, however, involve any doubt of the original character of the Master's teaching, and though many difficulties still beset the enquirer, the outlines of the familiar story are sufficiently clear. Gotama and Jesus are doubtless each presented as an ideal; but whatever interpretation might be placed upon their inner personality, they were both in outward aspect human.

The ethical correspondences in their temper and aim have been already illustrated. Both sought to win their countrymen to a higher life of unworldliness and mutual love. The Hindu sage strove to rescue them from the entanglements of vain desire, from the bondage of the world and its pleasures, by awakening them to the consciousness of pain, and arousing the insight into the unworthiness of the craving for the gratifications of sense. A true view of existence must be the foundation of moral endeavour.

Knowledge of the essential facts of a long experience was the necessary antecedent of a change of heart. But the Teacher whom the people of Jerusalem welcomed as "the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee" appealed at once to the conscience. He shared the religion of his hearers instead of exposing its futility, and based his summons on their hereditary faith. He found his first opportunity in the worship of the synagogue, but like the Indian moralist he loved the open air, and spoke more freely from the boat near the lake shore or among the red lilies on the mountain slope. Both started with a definite aim. "I go to Benares," said Gotama, "to establish the Kingdom of Righteousness.\* I will beat the drum of the Deathless in the darkness of the world." "The time is fulfilled," cried Jesus, "and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe in the good news." Both gathered disciples round them, though Jewish practice had not elaborated the formalities of reverence and courtesy which Hindu

\* This phrase is an equivalent, or interpretation, not a literal translation. To "turn the wheel" was the symbol of empire; the ideal monarch was a "wheel-turning king." To "turn the wheel of the Dhamma" (truth, teaching, law, morality, religion) was to establish the Rule of Right, the Buddhist parallel to the Kingdom or Rule of God.

tradition had long established between a Teacher, his personal attendants, and those who sought his wisdom. Both sent out chosen followers to proclaim their message. Both travelled with their adherents from place to place; neither carried any money; both depended for their food on the goodwill of others. A village rest-house or the foot of a tree supplied the Buddha's lodging; until gifts of gardens and residences accrued to the Order he, too, like the 'Son of Man, had not where to lay his head; and he died on his last journey in a Sāla-grove belonging to the Mallas of a little jungle-town called Kusinārā. Both needed to withdraw from the daily strain of intercourse into silence; Gotama spent whole seasons of meditation in forest solitudes; Jesus retired to the hills to pass the night in prayer.

Such were the outward aspects of the two personalities. Behind them the student soon discovers that they are presented in distinct characters with special functions and corresponding claims. Gotama is "one who has reached the Truth," a perfect Buddha, the supremely Enlightened. Jesus is God's Messiah, and, as such, God's Son. How had such exalted beings entered the world? How had they realised their high calling? How had their purposes been tested and their powers tried? What indications

had been vouchsafed to their disciples of their inner glory? Their birth, the crises of their careers, must surely have been marked by wonders that would match the work they had to do. According to the Buddhist tradition Gotama was the successor of a long line of Buddhas who had appeared in previous ages of the world. They had all passed through similar preparatory discipline, and finally descended in the same way from the heaven of Delight to be born on earth as men and finally attain Buddhahood. The conditions of their incarnation were all fixed, and the birth of Gotama duly fulfilled them. Selecting the lady Māyā, wife of the Sākyan chief Suddhodana, as his mother, he was conceived by her. At the sacred moment, and again when he left the womb, an immeasurable light filled the ten thousand world-systems, passing the glory of the gods. Later piety delighted to tell of the thirty-two Good Omens which heralded his advent. The blind saw, the deaf heard, and the dumb spake; the crooked became straight and the lame walked; the sick were healed, the prisoners were set free, the fires in each hell were put out. Fountains burst forth from the ground, flowers fell from the sky, music and perfumes filled the air, and the angels in heaven rejoiced and sang :

“ The Buddha-to-be, the best and matchless Jewel,  
 Is born for weal and welfare in the world of men,  
 In the town of the Sākyas, in the region of Lumbini,  
 Therefore are we joyful and exceeding glad.”\*

The hermit Asita heard them in his noonday rest, and went to Suddhodana’s abode, and found the babe glowing in beauty while unseen angels held a canopy over him. But as he received him in his arms he sang no *Nunc dimittis* like Simeon; to the surprise of the assembled Sākyans he wept. The future attainment of the child was assured, but he himself would have passed away, and would never hear the Truth from his lips.

“ The Prince will reach the summit of Perfect Enlightenment,  
 Seeing supernal purity he will set rolling the Wheel  
 of the Doctrine,  
 Out of pity, for the weal of the multitude,  
 And his religion will be prosperous.

My life below will not be long,  
 And in the midst of it all my appointed time will  
 come;  
 I shall not hear the Doctrine of the peerless leader;  
 Therefore am I afflicted, unfortunate, and suffering.”

\* From the ancient nativity poem in the *Sutta Nipāta*, vv. 679-700, tr. A. J. Edmunds (*Buddhist and Christian Gospels*, Philadelphia, 1908, vol. i., p. 186). Cp. Fausböll in *S.B.E.* x. (ii), p. 125.

On the night of the Great Renunciation as Gotama left the city for the homeless life and the quest of the secret of existence, Māra, the Prince of Evil, sought to stop him at the gate, and offered him the sovereignty of the world, with its four great continents and two thousand isles.\* On his refusal Māra followed him, muttering, "Whenever a thought of lust or anger or malice shall arise within you, I will get to know of it." The older Scriptures relate a whole series of such encounters, in one of which Māra adroitly coupled his proposal with the suggestion that he should rule by gentleness instead of force, without slaughter or conquest, without sorrowing or making others sorrow, thereby righteously. This was the Buddhist ideal of the King of Glory.† The Buddha had chosen the other alternative, in place of world-dominion he had chosen world-deliverance. So little could Māra understand such self-devotion that he tried another appeal to the Teacher's love of power. The Buddha's perfect knowledge endowed him with wondrous command over Nature; "You can turn the Himālaya, monarch of mountains," said Māra, "if you like, into gold." But the

\* *Buddhist Birth Stories*, vol. i. (1880, tr. T. W. Rhys Davids), p. 84.

† See below, p. 182.

same knowledge told the Buddha that Much always desired More. "A mountain of fine gold, twice over, would not suffice," he answered, "for one man's wants."\*

The most formidable trial, however, did not come from Māra. It arose after weeks of meditation under the trees near Gayā where he had solved his quest and attained his Buddhahood. The Truth was hard for the worldly, lost in lust and hatred, to understand. They could not gain the insight into what was so profound; and the prospect of constantly trying to teach the dull, the indifferent, the hostile, filled him with longing to remain at peace. The great Brahmā perceived the danger. "The world will be ruined," he thought, "if the Buddha refrains from preaching," and he descended from heaven and kneeled before the Teacher to plead the cause of suffering humanity. And the Blessed One, looking over the varieties of men's characters, saw them like lotus flowers in a pond, some unable to reach the surface, some resting on it, and some erect above the water, free in the air and sunshine. So there were minds of different capacities, some hard, some easy to instruct; and he answered, "Wide opened is the door of the Deathless to all who have ears to

\* Edmunds i., p. 199; *Kindred Sayings*, tr. Mrs. Rhys Davids, i., p. 145.

hear. Let them send forth faith to meet it." And the Great Brahmā respectfully saluting the Blessed One took a ceremonial leave and vanished. No story could better illustrate the singular elevation of the Buddha above even the greatest of the gods, while he shrank in human weakness from the weariness of the task before him. It finds its real analogue—but with how great a difference—in the inner conflict of Gethsemane. "Was life too great a price to pay for "the ransom of many"?

The ministry of Gotama, like that of Jesus, was accompanied by wonders. But they are of a different kind. At the future Buddha's birth, or at his attainment of supreme Enlightenment when the Marvels were repeated, the blind might receive their sight, the deaf hear, and the lame walk. But Gotama himself wrought no cures, nor did he bid his disciples heal the sick. He might pass through the air from place to place like the ancient sages, or through a wall;\* but others could do the same by certain disciplines

\* Transit through the air is implied in a curious fragment of the Gospel according to the Hebrews, where Jesus is represented as saying: "My mother, the Holy Spirit, took me and carried me up to Mount Tabor." Cp. Elijah, in 1 Kings xviii. 12; Ezek. iii. 12, viii. 3, xi. 1; Philip, in Acts viii. 39, 40. Cp. Luke xxiv. 36. John xx. 19, expressly mentions that the doors were closed.

of meditation. Tradition ascribed to him the multiplication of a cake placed in his almsbowl. He first ate of it himself and then fed five hundred brethren in the monastery at Jetavana; the scrap-eaters also had their fill; and when there were still cakes left, they were thrown away in a cave near the monastery gate. Another tale related the adventure of a disciple on his way to hear the Buddha preach. He had to cross the river Achiravati; it was evening and there was no ferry boat at the landing-place; so with confidence in the Master he went down into the stream. His feet did not sink in the water. He walked as on dry land, but when he reached the middle he saw waves. Then his confidence in the Buddha grew slack and his feet began to sink. But he made his confidence once more firm, and walking on over the water came to Jetavana. The parallel with the incident of Peter's attempt to join Jesus on the Lake of Galilee, thrust into Mark's story (vi. 48-51) by Matthew (xiv. 28-32), is too plain to be ignored. On the last day of Gotama's life a young man of the Mallas (in whose territory he was about to die) presented him with robes of burnished cloth of gold. Ananda, his beloved attendant, laid them on the Buddha when the Mallian had departed, and to his astonishment the Teacher's

skin became so exceeding bright that the cloth of gold appeared like a blotch. So, also, had it shone on the night of the great Attainment under the Bodhi-tree, but no one had witnessed the solemn sign. Now, death was at hand. In the third watch, Gotama predicted, he would pass away. The moment came, and even as "the earth did quake and the rocks were rent" as the Son of God yielded up his spirit, so did a mighty earthquake and thunders from heaven announce to an awe-stricken world the Buddha's death.\*

\* The possible influence of Buddhist story upon the Gospel narratives and teachings has been widely discussed, but often without adequate caution. A generation of study has revealed abundant evidence that India early received stories from Mesopotamia, and on the other hand in the days of Herodotus and Plato tales from India—and not tales only, but also such a food as rice—were known in Greece. In an essay on "Buddhist and Christian Parallels, the Mythological Background" (in "Studies in the History of Religions" presented to Crawford Howell Toy, New York, 1912), I endeavoured to show a connexion between the account of the Buddha's nativity and that of Apollo in the Homeric hymns, of which the priority could not be doubted. The conclusion suggested was that there had been a common fund of imaginative decoration round great personalities in Western Asia to which both stories might have been indebted. Four special cases deserve a few words. (1) The parallel in the case of Asita and Simeon is of a different kind. The essential

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incidents are remarkably similar, though their setting and application are different. (2) In the Temptation scenes of Matthew and Luke I see no reason to trace the presence of any Buddhist suggestion. Nor are the ethical parallels in the Gospels in any way dependent (in my judgment) on Indian scriptures. In spite of the diligent care of Mr. Edmunds I am unconvinced that any Pāli texts were known at Antioch or elsewhere within Luke's reach. (3) The tale of the multiplication of the cakes has no place in the Canon, and only appears in Buddhist literature at a much later date, though of course that is no proof of its origin, and it may be centuries older. But it is mingled with elements of such grotesque extravagance that I cannot imagine that the Evangelists owe anything to it. (4) The motive of the Petrine incident is clearly the same as that of the Buddhist counterpart, which again belongs to the same book as the story of the feeding of the Five Hundred. The Buddha, of course, could walk upon the water as upon the ground, but it was a recognised power of holy men, and even of laymen of distinguished piety. Given the story of Jesus' transit across the lake, for which no one claims an Indian origin, the attempt of Peter, like that of the Buddha's disciple, may well have been a typical illustration of the danger of over-confidence, fall, and recovery. Prof. Max Müller in one of his last essays, "Coincidences" (1896), accepted these two stories as probably suggestive of the Evangelic narratives. There remains of these four which are accepted by Prof. Garbe in his very careful examination of the mutual relations of East and West (*Indien und das Christenthum*, 1914), only the first, and there I am disposed to think there may be an application by Luke of some far-travelled

## II

The career of Gotama, like that of Jesus, is enveloped in the atmosphere of an idea. When he sets out to preach, he sets it in the forefront of his appeal to the five mendicants who had once watched his austerities with such admiration, and the claim is the theme of common report wherever he goes. The Western student finds it difficult to believe that a great moral Teacher could really have paraded himself as perfect in wisdom and virtue. The language of the texts, repeated again and again in formal paragraphs for recitation from memory, is doubtless due rather to the faith of disciples than to historic recollection. Public rumour spreads as the Buddha travels from place to place, and curiosity is roused among the Brāhmans whose practices he repudiated. A Brāhman named Pokkhara-sādi, living on a grant of land from the King of Kosala, hears of his arrival with some five

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reminiscence of the Indian sage's prediction of the destiny of the new-born babe to become the deliverer of a perishing world.—The Journal of the Pāli Text Society for the current year (1923) contains an early lecture by the late Prof. Rhys Davids on the general historical evidence for the knowledge of Buddhism in Mediterranean countries, which is still well worth reading.

hundred followers in the neighbourhood, and bids his pupil Ambattha find out whether the Sākyan teacher really is what report affirms, just as the Baptist sent two disciples to Jesus. "How shall I know?" asks Ambattha, and the Brāhman makes a significant reply :

"There have been handed down in our mystic verses thirty-two bodily signs of Great-Purusha—signs which, if a man has, he will become one of two things, and no other. If he dwells at home he will become sovran of the world [a wheel-turning king], a righteous king, bearing rule even to the shores of the four great oceans . . . without the need of baton or sword. But if he goes forth into the homeless state he will become a Buddha, who removes the veil from the eyes of the world."\*

The sources of this remarkable expectation can no longer be traced. The importance of its association with Mahā-Purusha in the development of the doctrine of the Buddha's person will appear later on. What the prophecies were which anticipated the advent either of a righteous king or an all-wise Buddha, in what schools of Brahmanical lore they were contained, why they disappeared without leaving any clues to their nature or origin, we cannot tell. The gorgeous picture of the great King of Glory,

\* *Dialogues of the Buddha*, tr. Rhys Davids, i., p. 110.

of his piety and the extension of his empire without force, so that the kings of the earth accept his suzerainty and come to him to learn the rules of life, of his fatherly care for his people and his provision for every kind of need, embodies the Buddhist ideal of royal majesty and beneficence.\* The conception of the Buddha is nowhere delineated in the same detail. It must be gathered out of the Scriptures which take it for granted. It is in brief the union of Perfect Knowledge and Perfect Holiness in a Man. Twin pillars of faith support it. The first is the belief in the moral order of the world expressed in the Law of the Deed. A great resolve, maintained untiringly from life to life and age after age through the unceasing cosmic rhythm of origination and dissolution, is certain of fulfilment. Nothing can frustrate it provided that its tension is never relaxed. The mysterious force of Karma will secure its aim. And, secondly, the path to knowledge lay through virtue. Insight was the fruit of character. The secret of existence was open to perfect righteousness. Every sort of trial must be unflinchingly endured, every kind of renunciation unhesitatingly made, every practice of gentleness and magnanimity must be renewed again and again in the warfare

\* *Dialogues* ii., p. 199.

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with evil, by him who would learn for the world's sake how it could be overcome with good. Here lay the twofold foundation of the ideal of the Buddha, and it was open to all who liked to try. Far, far back into the unbeginning past stretched the line of the Buddhas who had been. Far, far into the unending future faith discerned a similar line of the Buddhas who would be. No links apparently bound them to each other in continuous succession. Their advents were independent, but no world-age would see more than one, and a whole cycle might pass from the genesis of a universe to its destruction without one. When a fresh one appeared he would of course know of his predecessors, and would teach the same Truths. Some might be born like Gotama himself as Nobles, some as Brāhmans. The incidents of their nativity would all be alike, and they would each attain Buddhahood under a Tree of Wisdom. They would have exercised themselves in the same Perfections, they would acquire the same Powers and possess the same mysterious Knowledges.

These Powers were sevenfold, not like the sevenfold Gifts of the Spirit a heavenly endowment, but self-won by infinite toil and patience through innumerable lives. They are all ethical, and are reckoned as "faith, energy, con-

scientiousness, discretion, mindfulness, concentration, insight."\* With the same love of definite groups six modes of Higher Knowledge were distinguished. Omniscience, of course, lay in the background, but the full scope of its content surpassed common apprehension and was consequently withheld. The Four Truths supplied all that was needed for the right ordering of conduct on the way to victory over Ill. Buddhahood—and, indeed, Buddhist holiness as realised by the disciple though not in the same full measure—carried with it, first, the possession of mysterious forms of activity, reduplication of the person, sudden invisibility, passage through obstacles, walking on water as on solid ground, transit through air, ascent to the sky. The same purity of heart which gained this conquest over material conditions, secured the Heavenly Ear which could hear sounds near or remote in earth or heaven. Similarly it conferred the recognition of all different tempers and dispositions, the unerring discrimination between the passionate and the calm, the angry and the gentle, the dull and the alert, the attentive and the wandering, the broad and the narrow, the mean and the lofty, the steadfast

\* *Dialogues* iii. 236. A different list of ten is given in the *Majjhima Nikāya* i., p. 69.

and the wavering, the free and the enslaved. Serene and steadfast, memory could retrace the long chain of states in past ages which had at last reached its term, the conditions of innumerable births being revealed unerringly to recollection. With the same clarity the Heavenly Eye could follow the destiny of the virtuous and the sinful, the happy and the wretched, as they passed away according to their deeds to their appointed lots of bliss or pain. And, lastly, alert and undistracted, the saint realised his victory over the world, his mastery over desire for continued life in heaven, his knowledge of the Truths which freed him from the bondage of ignorance and sin.\*

What, then, was the antecedent history of Gotama himself? How had he reached the Buddhahood in which he was not only emancipated himself, but could open the way of deliverance to beings of every rank? The piety of believers soon provided an answer. The Pāli canon contains a poem which carried back the story to the days of the Buddha Dīpankara, the twenty-fourth in the series behind the Sākyan Teacher. A hermit named Sumedha on Mount Dhammaka not far from the Himālaya, who had attained the insight needful for liberation, travel-

\* *Dialogues* i., p. 88 *ff.*

ling through the air, saw the citizens of Rauma joyfully clearing the road. Dīpankara, attended by 400,000 saints, was coming, and Sumedha, spreading his bark-robe and skin-mantle in the mire, lay down upon his face for the Buddha and his crowd of followers to pass over him unsoiled. As the vast company approached he reflected that he could, if he wished, that day achieve his own consummation. But "Why," he asked himself, "should I cross the ocean of existence alone?" and the vow rose in his heart, "I will attain Buddhahood, embarking in the ship of the Truth I will carry across with me men and *devas*."<sup>\*</sup> Dīpankara, standing by the hermit's matted hair, noted the resolve. It was the first great act of Renunciation which the aim at supreme Enlightenment required, the presage of fulfilment after countless ages foreseen and announced by Dīpankara. Here was the start of that long passion through which the aspirant had to make his way to the goal. Each life in one world-æon after another involved him in its entanglement of change and suffering. The Karma of the past exposed him to innumerable trials as animal or man. Behind these tales lay the subtle idea that all forms of animated existence, from frog or rat to the great Brahmā himself, belonged

\* *Buddhist Birth Stories*, tr. Rhys Davids, i., p. 18.

to one great scheme of life. Whoever aspired to become a Buddha must understand all forms of experience. He must pass through all phases, animal, human, superhuman, and adapt himself in sympathy to all. As the hermit Sāma he dwelt in the forest on the Himālaya. "I drew to myself lions and tigers by the power of my benevolence. I lived surrounded by panthers, bears, and wild buffaloes, by gazelles and boars. No creature is in terror of me, and I have no fear of any being. The power of benevolence is my footing, therefore I dwell on the mountain slope." As man he must be tried again and again that he may meet ill-will with forbearance, be patient under abuse or cruelty, and learn to overcome evil with good. Mocked and derided, pierced with stakes, smitten by a king's orders with an axe as if he were a senseless block, offering life itself again and again to those in need, he firmly trod the path of pain, that by the steadfast practice of the Ten Perfections he might win the knowledge that would save the world.\* When the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hien visited Ceylon in the fifth century of our era,

\* These form the subject of another poem in the Canon. The Ten Perfections were almsgiving (*i.e.*, generosity or charity), goodness, renunciation, wisdom, firmness, patience, truth, resolution, kindness, and equanimity.

he witnessed the ~~festival~~ of the Exposition of the Buddha's tooth. The holy relic was borne along the road between five hundred figures ranged on either side. They represented some of the multitude of forms in which the Buddha-to-be had given himself to his sublime purpose. Ten days before, a royal messenger rode through the city on a splendidly caparisoned elephant, and with beat of drum proclaimed the sacred acts, and bade the inhabitants prepare to do fit reverence to the Author and Finisher of their faith.

"He gave up Kingdom, city, wife, and son. He plucked out his eyes and gave them to another. He cut off a piece of his flesh to ransom the life of a dove. He cut off his head and gave it as alms. He gave his body to feed a starving tigress, he grudged not his marrow and brains. In many such ways as these did he undergo pain for the sake of all living. And so it was, that, having become Buddha, he continued in the world for forty-five years, preaching the Law, teaching and transforming, so that those who had no rest found rest, and the unconverted were converted."\*\*

Is it surprising if the devout believer, gazing upon the forms through which the Great Physician had passed to heal the sickness of his ignorance and sin, felt some of the passion of pity, awe, and reverence, with which a pious

\* Fa-Hien, *Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, tr. Prof. Legge (1886), p. 105.

Catholic in moments of exalted emotion looks on the Stations of the Cross?

The earliest narratives of the public activity of Jesus present him as a Teacher. He passes from synagogue to synagogue, he sits in a boat by the lake shore, or on a knoll upon the hill, and gathers hearers round him as he speaks. Disciples and adversaries address him—even during the last days in Jerusalem—by the same title. Half humorously, half sadly, he calls himself a prophet. In Galilee rumour gives him that character, the same word passes among the crowds in the capital. Our oldest Gospel, like the Apostle Paul, adds a second to his birth name, and designates him Jesus Christ. The word has here lost its literal meaning “anointed,” and ceases to be descriptive. But what did it mean when Jesus enquired what his followers thought him, and Peter answered, “Thou art the Anointed”? Who was the “Anointed,” and what was he to do? The word might be used in the general sense of one commissioned or consecrated, chosen for some divine purpose. The Persian Cyrus is said to be Yahweh’s Anointed (Hebrew, *Messiah*; Greek, *Christ*), to set Israel free from the Babylonian yoke.\* The prophet, in the lesson which Jesus read in the

\* *Isaiah xlvi. 1.*

synagogue at Nazareth, declared that he had been “anointed” to preach good tidings to the poor; and Peter tells Cornelius that God had “anointed” Jesus with holy Spirit and with power.\* The chrism was the mark first of all of the king, and then in later days of the high priest. David’s heart smote him for his disrespectful trick on Saul because he was “Yahweh’s Anointed”; Israel’s lament for her captive king bewailed him as “the breath of our nostrils, Yahweh’s Anointed”; and the Psalmist drew an ideal picture—was it in the days of Alexander Jannæus (105-79 B.C.)?—of a combined attack by the kings of the earth against Yahweh and his “Anointed.”† So the Solomonic poet (70-40 B.C.) prays for a righteous king, who shall make the Gentiles serve beneath his yoke, and calls him “Anointed Lord,” an almost certain mistranslation of the Hebrew “Anointed of the Lord.”‡ A similar corruption is probably to be traced in the report of the angelic announcement to the shepherds, where “anointed Lord” (Luke ii. 11) should be read “the Lord’s Anointed” as in verse 26. This was a regal

\* Isaiah lxi. 1; Luke iv. 18; Acts x. 38.

† 1 Sam. xxiv. 6, 10; Lam. iv. 20; Ps. ii. 2.

‡ *Psalms of Solomon*, edited by Ryle and James (1891), xvii. 36.

epithet, and it drew down upon Jesus the charge for which he suffered. The superscription "The King of the Jews" proclaimed it above his head, and the mockers cried, "Let the Anointed, Israel's King, now come down from the cross, that we may see and believe."\*

To the name Jesus Christ some manuscripts of Mark i. 1 add the words "Son of God" which many critical editors reject. The uncertainty of the reading attaches also to its meaning. The term is used by Jesus and Paul in the highest spiritual sense, of the peacemakers, or of those who are led by God's spirit.† But in ancient Israel it had acquired a special application to the nation. "Israel is my son, my first-born," was Yahweh's message to Pharaoh through Moses. "Sons are ye of Yahweh your God" was the Deuteronomist's declaration to his countrymen. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him," pleaded the prophet Hosea, "and called my son out of Egypt."‡ With the establishment of the monarchy the king became the representative of his people. The prophet Nathan promised David a perpetual succession to his throne, and in exalted language declared the

\* Mark xv. 26, 32.

† Matt. v. 9; Rom. viii. 14.

‡ Exod. iv. 23; Deut. xiv. 1; Hos. xi. 1.

divine protection on each prince, "I will be his father, and he shall be my son." A later Psalmist repeated the promise, "He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, . . . I also will make him my firstborn."\* The angel Gabriel, accordingly, announces to Mary that her son "shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever." This expectation that Jesus should reinstate the monarchy was long cherished. The disciples on the way to Emmaus, who describe Jesus as a prophet mighty in deed and word, add that they had hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel; and before his ascension the question is still asked, "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"†

Israel, like the Buddhists, had its vision of an ideal king, but the picture of his gentleness—like rain on the new-mown grass—his righteous and peaceful reign, is marred by threats. To give him universal empire all kings are to fall down before him, and his enemies to lick the dust.‡ This element of violence, born of the

\* 2 Sam. vii. 14; Ps. lxxxix. 26 *f.*

† Luke i. 32, xxiv. 19, 21; Acts i. 6.

‡ Ps. lxxii. 8 *ff.*

hatred sprung from long oppression, prompted the Psalmist to describe the “Lord’s Anointed” as empowered to “break the nations with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” The commission is re-echoed by the Pharisaic poet with similar vindictiveness (*Pss. Sol. xvii. 24, 26, 27*), and it is heard again and again in the Christian Apocalypse. To him that overcometh the Son of God promises “authority over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to shivers.” The mysterious woman arrayed with the sun, crowned with twelve stars, and standing on the moon, gives birth to a man child who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. The august title of the Lamb is Lord of lords and King of kings. In the guise of the dread leader of the armies of heaven he will smite the nations with the sharp sword issuing from his mouth, and rule them with an iron rod.\* It was the fierce horror of sin that prompted this passion. Its vehemence swept away all restraint as the Apostle Paul described “the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus :

\* Rev. ii. 27, xii. 5, xvii. 14, xix. 15, 16.

who shall suffer punishment, eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints.”\*†

“Are you the Anointed, the Son of the Blessed?” asked the high priest of his victim at the trial. “I am,” said Jesus. When had the solemn Unction taken place, how had he become God’s Son? Two answers are to be found to such questions in early Christian literature. It is not a little singular that two of our Gospels should contain them both. The oldest tradition attached the divine choice of Jesus to his baptism at the hands of John. As he came up out of the water he saw the heavens rent asunder, as Ezekiel had seen so that he beheld divine visions. Jewish piety had already depicted such a consecration for the ideal priest—“The heavens shall be opened, and from the temple of glory there shall come upon him sanctification with the Father’s voice;” while to a descendant of Judah, also, it was predicted that the heavens should be opened to him, “to pour out the spirit, the blessing of the holy Father.”† Jesus, then, saw the Spirit as a dove descending into

\* 2 Thess. i. 7-10.

† Mark i. 10; Ezek. i. 1; *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (tr. Charles), Lev. xviii. 6; Judah, xxiv. 2

him,\* and a voice came out of the heavens, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." The voice addresses Jesus personally. Like the rending of the skies it was a private experience. In the words "Thou art my Son" we recognise a parallel with the language of Psalm ii. The additional designation "the beloved," repeated at the Transfiguration, found its way into early Christian literature as a title of Christ. Luke explains it (ix. 35) as "my chosen," which looks back to the description of the Servant of the Lord in Isa. xlvi. 1: "My chosen, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him." Peter applies the title "Servant" to Jesus (Acts iii. 13, 26; iv. 27, 30), but it soon disappeared in preference to the more exalted significance acquired by the term Son. The verb rendered "in thee I am well pleased" really carries in it a more pregnant meaning, that of decision, determination, and hence of selection. The phrase is in fact equivalent to "on thee hath my choice fallen"; it expresses the act of realising an intention, not the state of subsequent satisfaction.†

It will be noticed that Luke and Matthew

\* So Westcott and Hort, and the best German editors.

† Cp. Bacon, *in loc.* Gal. i. 15.

slightly diverge from Mark's account. The dove descends for Luke "in bodily form" so that it is visible to the bystanders. The narrative begins to convert an inward vision into an external event. The process is completed by Matthew's transformation of the divine words into a public attestation of the dignity of Jesus as Son of God. These changes may have issued half consciously from the Evangelists' perception of a certain incongruity between the Marcan tradition and the stories which they had already told of Jesus' birth. For Luke related that the Baptist's entry into the world had been miraculous; had not the Christ an origin more wondrous still? The angelic announcement of a future king to sit on David's throne seemed inadequate, and Gabriel adds that the child shall be born through the overshadowing power of the Most High, and in virtue of that august parentage shall be called Son of God. Many critics have seen in this declaration an enlargement of the simpler tale. It has recently been made probable that it is an expansion of the source on which he worked by Luke himself.\* But the conception that the Voice at the Baptism really denoted the adoption

\* See the very careful phraseological analysis by Mr. Vincent Taylor, in his recent work, *The Historical Evidence for the Virgin Birth* (1920).

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of Jesus as God's Son was emphasised by the form in which the martyr Justin quoted it in the second century, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" (Psalm ii. 7), a reading which can be traced in Christian writers for more than two hundred years later, and is preserved among so many other curiosities in the famous manuscript which once belonged to Beza, and is now among the treasures of the University Library at Cambridge.\*

Such were the ideas which gathered around the persons of the Buddha and the Christ as they were believed to have lived and taught among their countrymen. But what were they in themselves? On the basis of historical tradition fresh constructions were imposed, wrought out of profound personal experience and current philosophical speculation. For St. Paul the title "Son of God" is much more than an equivalent for "the Anointed." It was not a title of kingly dignity, it implied a real spiritual paternity. He was God's "own" Son, sent forth to human birth. He left the splendours and freedom of heaven to become poor, and submit himself to

\* Luke iii. 22. According to Acts xiii. 33 the Apostle Paul applied the same passage to the resurrection in his address at Antioch in Pisidia.

the bondage of the Jewish Law. He had belonged to the realms above; first of created beings, he had been invested with the Power and the Wisdom of God, and while God was the source whence all things came he was the channel of their production, the intellectual agent which shaped and maintained the order of the world. This wondrous being was, indeed, still man, but with a heavenly humanity, progenitor of the redeemed as Adam had been the begetter of our mortality. Once radiant in light he had condescended to be born of woman, and to die upon the cross. This marvel of love, the love of the Father in giving the Son, the love of the Son in giving himself, to such a death, filled the Apostle's mind with adoring devotion, and carried him through hardship and peril from Damascus to Rome. He did not attempt to picture his occupation in the ages which preceded his entry into the earthly scene. The conditions of his preparation for his mission were veiled in mystery. At what point of time the eternal purpose of the Father was communicated to the Son it was impossible to enquire, and the revelation was withheld. It was enough that by his obedience to death he had been exalted to the right hand of God, and in celestial sovereignty

as Lord made ready to put down every Principality and Authority and Power.\* But this august Being was also identified with the Spirit (2 Cor. iii. 17). If Christ was in the believer, so also was the Spirit; and if the relationship might be expressed inversely, and the disciple was in Christ or in Spirit, the experience thus described in different terms was practically the same.

The Fourth Evangelist boldly interpreted the person of the Son of God with the help of a current conception of Greek philosophy, the Logos or "Word." Christianity was thus at once brought into the stream of Hellenic culture, and provided with a metaphysic. The divine Son was presented as the immanent Reason through which all things were made. Older than the "first-born of creation," he had dwelt in eternal glory with the Father. Deriving from that sublime fount his own being as life and light, he shared in the unresting activity of his Sire, and not only upheld the fabric of the world, but imparted his life and light to man. In human nature there was thus an element akin to Deity, so that Irenæus could say that "the

\* These are technical terms (1 Cor. xv. 24) descriptive of the world-rulers (ii. 6) whose enmity had brought about Christ's death (ii. 8). Compare other enumerations in Rom. viii. 38; Eph. i. 21, iii. 10, vi. 12; and Chapter I., p. 30.

Son of God became Son of Man, that man, by containing the Word and receiving the Adoption, might become Son of God," and Athanasius might affirm still more pointedly at a later stage of doctrinal development that "God became man that man might become God." On this foundation all the theories of the significance of Christ's death were laid. The story of the Cross was too firmly planted in apostolic remembrance for it to be ignored. The attempt to evade it by supposing with Cerinthus that Jesus was mysteriously caught away, and Simon of Cyrene was substituted in his stead, could not be sustained. But the explanation of so strange and awful an event as the crucifixion of the Son of God was difficult. If, as St. Paul wrote, believers were "bought with a price," to whom was the price paid? For many centuries it was imagined that it was paid to the devil, and elaborate theories were devised to show how he was outwitted in the transaction. English theology to-day still offers divergent interpretations. One aspect of it is presented as a solemn act of reparation to the honour of Deity injured by human sin. In another it is exhibited as the sole ground for our faith in God as love. All such speculations—and in the history of Christian theology they are manifold—belong to an order of thought which

has no place in Buddhism. Just as Sumedha enters on his long progress towards Enlightenment out of compassion for the world, of his own motion, without suggestion or summons from any loftier source, and just as Gotama after his Attainment and Temptation starts out to proclaim the saving Truth unaided by the "power" of any Spirit from on high, so his death is the final demonstration of man's victory over the world of evil. He had fought the good fight and come out Conqueror; he had done what ought to be done and shown others how to do it; for him there was no more re-birth. He, too, could say, though in a different sense from Christ, "It is finished."

### III

When the Brāhmaṇa Pokkharasādi sent his pupil Ambattha to find out whether the report was true that Gotama was really a Buddha, he told him that if the Sākyan Teacher was truly a manifestation of the Great-Purusha, thirty-two signs would be found upon his person. Who or what was the Purusha?

Like the Greek term Logos it was a word of current philosophy, and again like the Logos it had a long history behind it. In the metaphysical discussions reported in some of the ancient tracts known as Upanishads, and in the

Vedic hymns behind them, it had acquired a peculiar meaning. In common use it denoted simply "man," a human being. But the early thinkers in their search for the ultimate Reality used it to designate what we call Spirit. Here was the ground of all existence, the fundamental fact of all our consciousness. Thought, feeling, all that passes within us moment by moment, all that makes up what we call our personality, was only possible through its presence within us. That presence was constant, and gave us the power to know ourselves distinct from others, but at the same time it united us with them in a common life which pervaded all things. Purusha dwelt in the heart, unseen, smaller than the small, and yet he transcended the world and was greater than the great. Language failed to define it, for it might be conceived as a point, without parts or dimensions, and yet it was boundless like space. Source of all our mental activity it was itself "made of mind." As such it was an Infinite Person, who needed neither hands or feet wherewith to grasp or run, who could see without eyes, hear without ears, the universal Knower, who yet veiled himself from recognition save by those who trod the highest way. Early Indian philosophy was more ready than Greek to make an alliance with mythology.

No disciple of Pythagoras, or Plato who conceived of the ultimate Unit of Being as a Monad, would have endowed him with the attributes of the sun. Brahmanic imagination did not shrink from such an identification. Was not Purusha the light of the world, the “golden,” who knew all things? So he had golden hair and a golden beard, he was golden even to the tips of his nails. By what process the expectation had been generated that Purusha might manifest himself, and that in that wondrous event he would appear either as a Wheel-turning King or a Blessed Buddha, it is no longer possible to trace. No prophecies of his advent survive. Later Hindu poetry presents figures endowed like the Buddha with the sacred marks, but of their origin nothing is known. The Long Collection in the Pāli canon contains a list of them with explanations of the moral qualities in preceding lives which secured them for Gotama. The most significant—wheel-like discs upon the soles of his feet with a thousand rays—due to former lives of untiring labour for the welfare of human kind, dispelling fear and dispensing just protection,\* became the symbol of the Buddha in early monuments, before sculpture ventured to represent his actual form.

Here was the germ for the development of a

\* *Dialogues* iii., p. 141.

new Buddhism in which the person of the founder received a fresh interpretation, and a system of ethical culture was transformed into a religion. The communities of the Brethren were surrounded by many types of current speculation and practice like the early Christians. Gotama's rejection of all Brahmanical ritual cut them off from the influences of ceremonial worship such as operated on the Church through contact with the Hellenic mysteries. The reactions of thought were more subtle and far-reaching, though their full effect only became visible much later. By the time of Asoka enquiry was already astir. Did not the Buddha's ordinary habit lift him above the world? Had he really lived our common life? Did he not himself remain in heaven, sending to earth a specially created semblance? Nay more, could not the Buddhas "stand" in all directions, inhabiting or pervading by their power the four quarters of the world, the zenith above or the nadir below? Thought is on the way to the conception of some kind of omnipresence, and must not this imply that even death could not remove them from the existing scene? But the successions of the past were without number; there must then be an infinite multitude of Buddhas surviving in transcendent modes of being. They could not be in-

active, their nature was to teach and to deliver. There must also be infinite worlds to occupy them in which to perform their saving work. Moreover, there would be a continuous succession of them in the future. For these, accordingly, there must be a corresponding multitude of Buddhas-to-be, in every stage of preparation, ripening in wisdom and virtue, to enter on the same holy task. All these grandiose ideas reacted on each other. The original mission of Gotama committed to his first disciples was expanded in every direction. Incalculable aggregates of numbers were piled up to indicate the infinite scale on which the worlds, their inhabitants, and their deliverers, were all presented.

Early Buddhism had elaborated a short series of twenty-four past Buddhas, but had looked no further forward than a single successor to Gotama. He was known as Metteyya (Sanskrit, Maitreya), the impersonation of *Mettā*, the universal love which was the Buddhist ideal. As the Buddha-to-be he was already dwelling in the Heaven of Delight where those who were on the way to Buddhahood spent their last life till the fitting hour arrived for their descent. The Chinese pilgrims saw a colossal wooden statue of him adjoining a great monastery in the Upper Indus valley. He was designated in poetry as

*ajita*, the “Unconquered,” parallel to the Latin *invictus*, a favourite epithet of the Persian Mithras, god of light, whose worship spread through the Roman Empire, as far as our own Tyne. To him the dying King of Ceylon, Dutthagāmini, was conveyed in a celestial car from the dedication ceremony of the Great Mound which he had constructed in honour of the Buddha. When Yuan Chwang on his way to the famous Buddhist university of Nālandā (A.D. 636) was seized by pirates who boarded the vessel in which he was sailing down the Ganges, and lay bound on the altar as an offering to the unhallowed goddess Durgā, it was to Maitreya that he committed himself. Under his instruction he prayed that he might learn the Truth, then “Let me return and be re-born here, that I may convert these men and cause them to give up their evil deeds, and practise themselves in doing good.”\* To this devotion he remained faithful to the last. Upon his death-bed in his native land, as he lay worn out with incessant toil as a translator of the Scriptures, it was with a hymn of praise to Maitreya on his lips that he passed away.†

\* *Life of Hiuen Tsiang*, tr. Prof. S. Beal (1888), p. 88.

† *Ibid.*, p. 217.

Buddhist imagination, however, was not satisfied with this single figure. The missionary spirit infused by Gotama into the Order had carried the Teaching far and wide. Asoka had set a royal example by sending his son to Ceylon. No hardship was too great, no danger too threatening, to check the preacher's zeal. With astonishing persistence a long succession of the brethren, converted Brāhmans, princes, nobles, men of various races and degrees, moved (as the chronicler has it) by a desire to convert the world—"for when the world's welfare is concerned who could be slothful or indifferent?"—traversed the mountains and deserts north of the Himālaya into Eastern Asia. As the universe expanded before their view, faith demanded that provision should be made for the vast multiplicity of new world-systems for which boundless space provided room. Hosts of Buddhas-to-be, "countless as the sands of nine Ganges," were conceived with the ready creativeness of piety, and were displayed as all engaged in the purpose of universal rescue. The aim of the believer's discipline was enlarged to match. The true follower of the Buddha was no longer concerned primarily to secure his own emancipation. When he passed away he could do no more for those who had benefited by his

instruction or example. Death carried him out of the reach of the unconverted who had not yet had an opportunity to hear the Truth. He must, therefore, embrace the larger aim, and devote himself to the labour of becoming a Buddha. Of this calling transcendent illustrations were offered him in the persons of exalted figures who had long since won the holiness entitling them to final peace, but chose still to engage untired in the conquest of suffering, ignorance, and sin.

Out of this excitement of activity and devotion came a famous Sanskrit work, discovered about a century ago by the English Resident at the court of Nepal, Mr. Bryan Hodgson. In the Sacred Books of the East (vol. xxi) its title is rendered "The Lotus of the Good Law"; it may perhaps be better designated (with the distinguished Japanese Buddhist, Prof. Anesaki of Tokyo) "The Lotus of the Perfect Truth." Its author is unknown, nor is its date certain, but it is named in the earliest catalogue of the Chinese Scriptures between A.D. 265 and 316. Pious tradition ascribed it to the last years of the Teacher's life, and modern scholars have often found a rough parallel of its relation to the older presentations of Gotama in the comparison of the Fourth Gospel with its predeces-

sors. It exercised enormous influence in Eastern Asia, and it is said that it is found to-day on the lecterns of all the twelve denominations of Japan. In the seventh century the Chinese pilgrim, I-Ching, related that his second teacher, Huihsı, "read it once a day for more than sixty years; thus the perusal amounted to twenty thousand times."\*

The scene opens on a traditional site of Gotama's teaching, the Vulture's Peak near Rājagrīha, but it is no longer the historic hill; like the New Jerusalem it is idealised. The Buddha, bearing the thirty-two Marks, is absorbed in profound contemplation, a vast concourse of saints and hearers surrounds him in silent reverence, and a shower of heavenly flowers falls on them from above. A wondrous ray issues from his forehead, and thousands upon thousands of worlds are illuminated. Maitreya sees all orders of beings traversing the succession of existences from the demons of hell to the gods above the skies, Buddhas preaching to the weary and distressed, and Buddhas-to-be adapting themselves to every form of need. It is the preparation for the exposition of a fresh teaching, designed to bring into harmony all modes

\* I. Tsing, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion*, tr. Prof. J. Takakusu (1896), p. 205.

of access to the Truth. So manifold are the dispositions and capacities of those who need instruction, that the methods of appeal and the modes of guidance must be differently applied, while the fundamental aim remains the same. Gotama had once declared—in view perhaps of a jungle fire on a neighbouring hill—that the whole world was burning. The flames of lust, ill-will, and stupidity, of grief and lamentation, suffering and despair, were everywhere alight. The symbol receives another application in the Lotus. A house is on fire while the children are at play inside. They are unconscious of danger, and the father must tempt them to leave their toys by telling them of carts awaiting them outside, drawn by bullocks, goats, or deer. They represent three Roads or Courses, and so three modes of transportation or Vehicles,\* across the scene of birth and death into the region of release and liberation. The simple Hearer cares only for his own deliverance through the Buddha's teaching, and chooses a light cart such as a deer can draw. Others aim higher, and seek through strenuous meditation to acquire the knowledge of causes and effects. They are “Enlightened-for-one,” who see the Truth them-

\* On the origin of this term see the writer's *Theism in Medieval India*, p. 62 f.

selves, but cannot impart it to others. A third group toil for the exalted knowledge which will give them a share in the Buddha's purpose of universal deliverance, "for the sake of the common weal and happiness, out of compassion for the world, for the complete Emancipation of all beings." These are the Buddhas-to-be.\*

Another parable proclaims the same lesson. A mighty cloud comes up over the world parched with heat. On mountain and valley it sheds its fertilising rain through the whole earth. There are grasses and herbs, there are shrubs and trees of every kind, the small and the great, all quickened by the same water. They sprout and grow, they produce flower and fruit, each after its kind, by its own laws. But they are all nourished by a common life. Such is the manifestation of the Buddha. Like a great cloud he appears in the world, to refresh the withered and encourage the pining, each according to his own aptitude and faculty. To all beings is the word addressed without distinction, depraved and good, sectarian, heretic, and true believer—"Inaccessible to weariness, I spread in season the rain of the Truth."† In the education of his sons, it is proclaimed, the Teacher is equal

\* *S.B.E.* xxi., p. 74 *ff.*

† *Ibid.*, p. 119 *ff.*

and not unequal, impartial and not partial. The same light from sun and moon falls upon all, the virtuous and the wicked; so does the wisdom of the All-knowing guide all beings alike. Here are the Gospel images, the sun that shines on the evil and the good, the rain that falls on the just and the unjust, symbols of the universal beneficence of God. But the figure of the great cloud full of invigorating help for all is the emblem of something more than natural bounty. It is a type of spiritual energy, of educative grace, divinely working in the sphere of souls. The agelong process of enlightenment—figured in a story of giving sight to a man born blind—is for ever going on, and powers divine and human are linked to one purpose, and co-operate for one end. So as “all beings are his children, . . . he causes all to reach complete Nirvāna”; and in the fulness of universal Buddhahood—for the promise runs “Ye shall all become Buddhas”—the lost and the degraded shall be at last redeemed.\*

As there is but one Truth, to be made intelligible in many diverse ways, so there is but one Buddha, who manifests himself in the infinite multitude of Buddhas engaged in proclaiming it

\* *S.B.E.* xxi., p. 89, ver. 91, *Jinas*, literally “Conquerors,” an early title of the Buddhas

in innumerable worlds. These mighty myriads, past, present, and to come, were the reflexions of an ultimate Unity. Çākyā-Muni was no distinct or separate person. "My body," he exclaims, "has existed in thousands of *kotis* of regions; during a number of *kotis* of ages beyond comprehension I teach the Truth to beings."\* Not only at Gayā did he attain Enlightenment, he had really reached it many hundred thousand myriads of *kotis* before. By these gigantic piles of figures the poet sought to waken the imagination of the infinite. The multiplication had another consequence. It stripped the history of reality. "Repeatedly I am born," said the Teacher, "in the land of the living." But it was only an apparent birth. The figure seated on the Vulture's Peak had no real humanity. He assumed the aspect of a man as a device for his hearers' welfare, but he only seemed to live and speak and die. The new Buddhism thus escaped from the problem which has always haunted Christian theology, for it had not to explain the union of two natures in one Person. Like some of the early Christian sects, it was frankly Docetic on the mortal side, but it emphasised all the more earnestly the absolute character of the Eternal. As such, sublimely

\* A *koti* = 10,000,000.

self-existent, he was no abstract metaphysical entity, but "the Father of the world, the Healer, the Protector of all creatures." What reason had he, it might be asked, to manifest himself thus unweariedly? "When men become unbelieving, ignorant, and thoughtlessly run into ill, then I who know the world's course consider—How can I incline them to Enlightenment, how can they become partakers of the Buddha-nature?"\* The "Light of the World" will leave none to dwell in darkness. Even the wicked Devadatta will achieve Buddhahood at last.

In this purpose of universal education the Buddha has the help of the Buddhas-to-be. At the summit of holiness are the great Saints who have acquired the saving knowledge, but deliberately refrain from claiming its privilege of final Peace, that they may devote themselves unceasingly to the warfare with evil. Their ranks include exalted figures of unknown origin. What influences may have prompted their elevation through contact with other modes of thought we cannot tell. There were noble creations—in Persian theology, in the group of Bountiful Immortals around the throne of Ahura Mazda, Lord Omniscient. Speculation is of small value;

\* *S.B.E.* xxi., p. 309 *f.*

the names are Sanskrit and have no apparent foreign connexions. Two of these devoted personalities, Mañjuçrī and Avalokiteçvara, repeatedly appear in the art of the new Buddhism on either side of the Buddha in the centre, just as in Ceylon and Siam two of Gotama's most eminent disciples, Sāriputta and Moggallāna, occupy similar positions. Mañjuçrī ("Gentle-Glory," or Mañjughosha, "Gentle-Voiced") first appears among the Buddhas-to-be in the Lotus. He rises as a prince out of the deep, on a hundred-leaved lotus. As he goes to hear the Buddha teach upon the Vulture's Peak he is asked how many he had delivered. Straight-way thousands and thousands rise out of the sea—symbol of the ocean of existence—and fly to the Peak like meteors to prove his blessed activity. Had he not said, when he took the vow of self-devotion, "I do not wish to become a Buddha quickly, for I wish to remain to the last in this world to save all beings"? As the source of Revelation he bore the title "Lord of Speech"; wisdom and learning belonged to him; he was the author of the Scriptures gathered under the title of "Transcendent Knowledge." Legends, especially in Nepal, connected him with the origins of civilisation, the establishment of order and law. Prayers and hymns were

addressed to him, and in the ease with which names and functions were amalgamated or transferred by Hindu piety, he was sometimes called Brahmā, regarded as the Creator or Architect of the world, and finally identified with a dim and mysterious figure, Ādi-Buddha, the Primordial Source of all existence.

Sharing the same passion for universal rescue, the All-Merciful Avalokiteçvara passed incessantly from one sphere of being to another. His name probably implied his wide outlook over all forms of suffering; he was said to have a face on every side; he was described as "radianc with great compassion." The Lotus celebrates his beauty, his lovely eyes full of wisdom and knowledge, of pity and benevolence. Theologically he is the son of Amitābha, the "Buddha of Boundless Light," and shines with spotless brightness. Ever ready to save those in danger he was called the "Giver of Fearlessness," or security, and the believer could call upon his name for deliverance from perils by fire or flood, the violence of goblins or giants, the risk of poison or robbers, the impulses of impurity or hate. When the young prince Çīlāditya (afterwards the famous King Harsha) was unexpectedly called to the throne (about A.D. 610), it was to Avalokiteçvara that he resorted for guidance.

The crisis was grave. His father was dead, his elder brother had been assassinated by the intrigues of a jealous neighbour. The duties of sovereignty fell upon him unprepared. In his distress he repaired to a famous statue in a grove near the Ganges, and there with fasting and prayer implored Avalokiteçvara's support. So had the young Solomon sought the Lord at Gibeon, but no burnt offerings were needed to secure the heavenly favour. The Buddha-to-be vouchsafed to appear to him, bade him raise up the true religion after the persecutor's oppression, and prove his earnestness by love and pity for the distressed. From time to time the beneficent activity of Avalokiteçvara carried him to the hells. When he came to the hell of "joylessness," Avichi, the hideous fires cooled, and as he entered huge lotuses burst forth to greet the bringer of deliverance. The infernal King Yama, who saw his suffering victims converted and released, did homage to him and disappeared. The hungry ghosts in their dismal city were relieved. On earth he saved the people of Magadha from famine, and even the insects and worms were brought out of their low estate, while the demons were taught to abandon their evil ways. The constant tendency to exalt the great objects of devotion finally raised him

above sonship to Amitâbha, and provided him a sire in Ādi-Buddha, in whom theological speculation found its highest term. In the recesses of unimaginable time this Fount of Being, conceived as Dante figured the Innermost Power of Paradise under the emblem of simple flame, devoted himself in sublime solitude to the meditation styled the “Creation of the Universe.” Thence was born Avalokiteçvara, who produced the sun and moon from his two eyes, Çiva from his forehead, and Brahmā from his shoulders. The syncretism of Buddhist and Hindu personalities is fast advancing. But the presentation of Avalokiteçvara as a vast Providence, the hope of the struggling, the conqueror of evil, and the pledge of the final beatitude of all, was the legitimate expansion of the aims of Gotama.

A Chinese version of the Lotus predicted that Avalokiteçvara—known in the Flowery Land as Kwan-yin—would appear as a woman when that form was appropriate to circumstances.\* The great Bodhisattvas are of course above sex, but Indian art did not disdain to robe Avalokiteçvara in woman’s dress. In China the female type became extremely prominent, sometimes with a

\* For the Chinese evidence (and the subsequent details about Ti-tsang) see the admirable work of Mr. R. F. Johnston, *Buddhist China* (1913).

child in her arms, and the devotion she excites has often been compared with Roman Catholic homage to the Virgin Mary.\* Another great Bodhisattva passed from India to China under the name of Ti-tsang, "Earth-Treasury." The broad earth was the symbol of his widespread compassion, and its solidity had its counterpart in the firmness of his great vow of self-devotion. His inexhaustible love was a treasure-house of mercy open to all beings. A discourse of the seventh century (founded on a lost Sanskrit original) describes his untiring work even for backsliding souls who have fallen once more into evil ways, and consequently incurred fresh punishment. Men have a froward nature, says the Buddha to the king of hell, but the patience and compassion of Ti-tsang are without limit, and he does not forsake even those who have wandered away again and again from the path of right. All round them were powers of evil ready to work their hurt, but Ti-tsang's example could lead even the devils to respect sincere religion, however humble.

"Lord," says Evil-Poison, one of the attendants of the King of hell, "we demons are countless in number. Each of us has his own duty assigned to him; we are

engaged either in helping men or in harming them, in accordance with the fate that they have brought upon themselves. We ask for leave to wander through the world of men, where there is so much evil, so little good. When we come to a house—whether it be a city mansion or a farmer's cottage—in which we find a single man or a single woman doing good, be it on ever so small a scale, or showing reverence for the Buddhas and holy things, though it be only by the offer of an altar ornament, or the burning of a little incense, or the laying of a single flower before Buddha's throne, or the devout recital of one verse in a hymn of praise,—when we come to the house of such a one as this, we demons will hold such man or woman in highest honour. Let but the holy Buddhas, past, present, and to come, vouchsafe to grant the permission we crave, and it will then be our privilege to act as guardian spirits of the homes of all righteous men and women, and to prevent disaster, sickness, and misfortune, from approaching their doors.”\*

The great Bodhisattvas are represented in the Lotus as undertaking the laborious career with a solemn vow. The Buddha can recall how one after another had made it in his presence as witness. It involved the dedication of all possessions to the spiritual welfare of all fellow-beings. When this had been tested, and his steadfastness had been proved, the Buddha would prophesy how his final attainment would be accomplished. For the ordinary disciple this august

\* Johnston, p. 85.

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sanction was not possible. It was enough to provide a discipline for the years of his mortality, and the original Eightfold Noble Path was replaced by a new series of Ten Stages. They are enumerated with a general similarity of purpose, though with marked variations of detail in different Scriptures. The aspirant started with the stock of dispositions and aptitudes generated within him by his past lives, and the experience which he had himself acquired. What prompted his self-dedication to the service of the suffering world could not be determined beforehand. There was no sudden calling from on high, no divine arrest diverting the believer from his secular path. The preacher's appeal might suggest it; the praises of the Buddha might quicken it; compassion for human misery might foster it. When once the thought "May I become a Buddha" had arisen in the mind, the pilgrim started on his long ascent. No higher stage could be reached until all the characteristics belonging to its predecessor had been fully attained. The earliest series marked out an ethical discipline of active goodness, renunciation, compassion, freedom from pride, faith, charity, and the like, apparently in somewhat haphazard order, till the seventh stage of self-control was reached. By that time the danger

of lapse was at an end. The character was built up so firmly that holiness was secure. Perfectly purified, his works would bear him on to complete "fulfilment." He would rise to the rank of Heir-Apparent to the sovereignty of the Truth; in the tenth stage he would receive the royal unction for his high office in the Tusita heaven, and would be ready to descend to earth and become a Buddha.

Many, no doubt, were the trials and vexations of the missionary teacher. The Lotus required that he should be patient, meek, devoted, moral, studious, and given to meditation. He must control anger, be humble towards the brethren, free from conceit, not irritated when asked a question, full of compassion for living beings, imparting such instruction as suits them. To stimulate the disciple's zeal the examples of the great Saints are continually enforced. For selfish ends men would bear discomforts from cold and wind; "Why," asks the poet, "will they not suffer for the sake of the world?" For the heroes of the faith there were great compensations. The preacher's task amid the indifferent and hostile was often dangerous. Amid abusive words and threats, or under a shower of clods and sticks, let him be patient, he should not lack defence. "When he shall stay alone,"

says the Buddha, “engaged in study, in a lonely place, in the forest or the hills, then will I show him my luminous body, and enable him to remember the lesson he forgot.”\* The creatures entrusted to his care shall join the great company of the Buddhas-to-be, and through him shall behold Buddhas numerous as the sands of nine Ganges. Where such an one had sojourned there should be built a shrine, dedicated to the Lord, whose spiritual son he had shown himself to be. Such fellowship was there between them that the Buddha could say, “That spot of earth has been enjoyed by myself. There have I walked, and there have I been sitting. Where that son of Buddha has stayed, there I am.”†

Later schemes start on a higher plane of ethical achievement. The believer is already in the “Joyful” beginning of his course secure of ultimate success. Lifted above all risk, not indeed of temptation (for Māra had assailed even the Buddha Gotama himself) but of fall, he has reached a point of departure from which he can never be shaken, he is full of gladness that “he is born into the family of the Buddhas.” Fears of life’s difficulties, of death, of future evil births, trouble him no more. He has given

\* *S.B.E.* xxi., p. 225.

† *Ibid.*, p. 327.

himself for the welfare of others; he is willing that their sins should "ripen" in him—i.e., that he should bear their penalty in hell, and thus release them from the "fruits" of guilt. The retribution inevitable under the Law of the Deed is thus fulfilled. In the second stage of freedom from all stain, the "Immaculate," the central purpose to mature all creatures for Buddhahood begets ten Great Resolves. As he advances increasing purity of heart secures for him increasing clarity of mind. By the vision of the Buddhas in the fifth stage imagination, memory, judgment, "capacity for assimilating the truth," are all strengthened. So he mounts, ever ascending on the upward way till he gains the "Arrival at the End," the sovereignty of the Truth, when he is wrapped in its beneficent "Cloud," and rains down on all creatures its fertilising power. He is a Buddha-to-be, who has become a Tathâgata, "he who has reached the Truth."

The figure has changed since Sumedha resolved to traverse the ocean of existence in a ship that would hold men and angels beside himself. The vessel which would make its laborious course over life's stormy sea is now presented as a majestic car driven through a field of battle in the agelong warfare with evil. The charioteer

is "clad with the armour of mercy"; his weapons are sympathy and morality; he is "intent on rescuing the world"; great in force, efficient in means, steadfast in aim, unwearied, he conquers in the strenuous fight and sets others free." He is supported by the assurance of the "perseverance of the saints," by the consciousness of co-operation with a vast multitude of fellow-workers in a great divine purpose, by the trust of filial communion with an everlasting Father. To strengthen his faith the Lotus portrays for him a great Apocalypse.\*

Once more the Buddha sits on the Vulture's Peak, surrounded by a vast assembly of Buddhas-to-be and Hearers of all classes, gods and men. A mighty shrine arises in the sky, adorned with terraces of flowers, arches, and banners, sparkling with jewels, resonant with bells, full of sweet odour scenting the whole world. The entire multitude rise in wonder and joy from their seats, and stand with outstretched hands in reverence. Suddenly a ray from the Lord's forehead illuminates all the Buddha-fields in the ten directions,† and an immense host of Buddhas appear from all points of the horizon. In

\* *S.B.E.* xxi., p. 227 *ff.*

† The eight points of the compass and the zenith and nadir.

dignified array they take their seats upon their thrones, formed in circle after circle like the petals of the mystic rose of Paradise, with their attendants gathered round them. From his own seat the Lord ascends into the sky and solemnly opens the door of the great Shrine.. The person of the Lord Prabhūtaratna, who had entered Nirvāna many hundreds of myriads of *kotis* of ages before, is seen within. Faint and emaciated, as if absorbed in abstract meditation, he announces that he has come to hear the exposition of the "Lotus of the Perfect Truth," and Çākyā-Muni takes his seat beside him. They are in fact identical. The hosts around are all the productions of Çākyā-Muni's own proper body, the manifestations of his ceaseless omnipresent energy. Again and again he had indeed seemed to attain Enlightenment, and pass away. From the infinite past he had proclaimed the Truth in world after world, satisfying the wants of all orders of beings in their several ways, assuming temporary form from birth to death, but always living, infinite and everlasting, seeing the uni-verse as it really is, beholding all things always present to him. Finally, as the two Lords sit side by side in the jewelled shrine in the sky, the concourse is increased by the appearance from beneath the earth of many hundreds of

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thousands of myriads of *kotis* of Buddhas-to-be. They all have the gold-hued bodies and the thirty-two marks of Great-Purusha. Rising on high they first salute the feet of the two Buddhas in the shrine, who sit in silence while they chant hymns of praise standing around the Buddhas enthroned below, and the multitude of Hearers remains mute. Fifty æons roll by, and to the august assembly they seem no longer than one afternoon.

Here is an imaginative expression of eternity, of "central peace subsisting at the heart of endless agitation." This is the ultimate reality for faith, the victory of the Truth is sure. The Buddhas who are the numberless projections of the Lord have given themselves through all time for the welfare of all beings, and their work is done. The Buddhas-to-be continue the great strife with evil, but above their warfare there is a realm where ignorance and sin are transfigured into achieved knowledge and realised good. The clouds of words in which Indian literary style envelopes this ideal should not conceal from us its resemblance to the essential conception of medieval Christendom. The visible Church at any given moment was only the representative of the vaster congregation which had been since the world began. It was the exponent

in time of the divine world-plan conceived in the timelessness of God. As the real *Civitas Dei* it carried back its origin to the first created beings; it was instituted when the angels sprang forth at the command "Let there be light," and began the song of joy and wonder of which they would never tire. On earth or in heaven it mattered not, it was spiritually the same, one in time and space, the conditions of all derived existence. The believer knew that the whole universe was the home of the Church, and at every moment in his pilgrimage he was environed by powers of righteousness continually ready to support him if he sought their aid. As the hour of departure drew near, the solemn *Subvenite* entreated the celestial watchers for their advent, "Come to his help, ye servants of God, meet him, all ye angels of the Lord, taking his soul and bearing it into the presence of the Most High." When the last moment was at hand, the Sarum Ritual (ed. 1490) sent forth the struggling spirit under the protection of the whole world's holiness :

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" Go forth, O Christian soul, from this world, in the name of the Father Almighty who created thee; in the name of Jesus Christ his Son, who suffered for thee; in the name of the Holy Spirit who was shed into thee; in the name of Angels and Archangels; in the name of

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Thrones and Dominions; in the name of Principalities and Powers, and all heavenly Virtues; in the name of Cherubim and Seraphim; in the name of Patriarchs and Prophets; in the name of Apostles and Martyrs; in the name of Confessors and Bishops; in the name of Priests and Levites, and all ranks of the Catholic Church; in the name of Monks and Anchorites; in the name of all faithful Widows,—this day be thy abode in peace, and thy dwelling in the heavenly kingdom.”

Who would not think a soul precious that was thus committed to the care of all the blessed since the dawn of time? Who would deny its dignity when the countless eyes of the hosts above were looking down upon its pains, and waiting to welcome its release. Both the Buddhist and the Christian sought to express the value of eternal life, conceived in sublime terms of truth and purity and love. Both looked to the Author of their being with gratitude and adoration. Both saw in the saints the victory over the world, and beheld in man the capacity to attain it. The Catholic, however, was untroubled by the thought that unbaptised infants could never enjoy the vision of God. Still less was he disturbed at the remembrance of the sufferers condemned not only to everlasting torment, but also to everlasting sin. With greater confidence in power and goodness on a

far vaster cosmic scale, the disciple of the Great Vehicle never doubted the heavenly promise, "You shall all become Buddhas"—equivalent in aim to the New Testament ideal, "that ye may become partakers of the divine nature." The function of Gotama, magnified to infinity in time and space, is made adequate to the ultimate perfection of all conscious beings. The purpose of Jesus, to seek and to save the lost, is only now being relieved of the limitations dogmatically imposed upon it, and presented in its universal scope. Shall we not welcome the faith of the Far East as a help in the great Providential enterprise of the education of the race?



THE story of a religion might be written in its prayers. There is its essential nature disclosed, its inmost spirit revealed. There all the secrets of piety are confided to the Infinite sympathy. There are its confessions of penitence, in the whisper of humiliation; there its entreaties for strength in sudden trial; and there also are its joyous psalms of praise in triumphant confidence, and its wondrous aspirations of purity and love. The literature of Christendom repeats in a thousand different tongues the practice of Jesus himself; and the mighty symphony of devotion wrought out of the first notes of "Our Father" includes the song of all creation blended with the rejoicings of the innumerable multitude of the redeemed, together with the faintest breathing of humanity sinking beneath its cross, with only strength to sigh "Not my will, but thine, be done." The practice of prayer rests on the conviction that in the kinship between man and God an interchange of thoughts and affections is possible. To the perplexed a light is shed upon a hidden way. The sufferer's pain is compassed with serenity and peace. Out of weakness

the penitent is sent forth in new might. In all the vicissitudes through which the soul is trained for God's high purpose there is a store of graces ready for every need. That is the Christian's faith. It is on this that the Church is built. I am not called on now to justify or even to expound it. Let us rather enquire how far Buddhism exhibits any corresponding trust or analogous practice.

## I

The ethical culture taught by Gotama threw the whole burden of deliverance from the bonds of sensuality, ill-will, and infatuation on the disciple himself. "Be your own lamps," he told them, "yourselves your refuge." No one else could win the victory over the world for them, for no one else could conquer themselves. The Teacher might show them the way, but they must tread it alone. It was no path of flowers, it demanded continuous effort, unceasing watchfulness, the maintenance of a moral tension that could never be relaxed. So far as the external conditions of life were concerned, the believer had to learn that he was involved in the consequences of his own acts. His person and his caste were determined for him under the Law of the Deed. So were the unforeseen occurrences, sickness or accident, the failure of his crops, the

plunder of his merchandise by thieves. No prayer would bring refreshing rain on withering fields; Brahmā would not interfere with the moral order working through drought in requital for some evil deed in a former birth; Indra would not stand by his side to protect him from the attack which visited a far off crime of violence or fraud. All that side of prayer in which the Christian has sought protection from calamity or danger, or, in its more refined form, harmony with the divine Will, was shut off from the Buddhist. The issues of past wrong could not be evaded. To meet them with resentment would only lay up more penalties for the future. But they must be borne without the help of support in pain or sorrow from a Power which understood all trial. Before the bounties of nature the Buddhist uttered no thanksgiving, before its vastness he felt no awe, before its ceaseless persistence he was without wonder, in its beauty he saw no gift of love. The quest of deliverance, the aim of escape, checked all the emotion which impels the Christian to recite the ancient summons, "Bless the Lord, all ye his works, in all places of his dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul."

But the disciple was not without emotions which at least bordered on religion. No one could love Karma, the mysterious and impalpable

Power for ever working in all conscious beings, and ceaselessly operative in the scene around. That was accepted, like the air we breathe, as a constant and inevitable element of all experience. In seeking emancipation from its bondage, resistance against its appointments, anger at its penalties, was futile. Only submission to its rule brought peace, and the mastery over the craving for continued gratification of low desire. To win this control, to eliminate every impulse of ill-will, every longing to dominate others, was the object of daily practices of meditation. There were mental exercises of intense concentration for ascent into regions where all distinctions of consciousness were lost, and in ineffable serenity the mind was lifted up alone and the heart grew calm within. Such efforts belonged to the higher reaches of inward discipline, in withdrawal from all externality, so that all apprehension of the limits encompassing individuality fell away, and the sense of being a Self or person disappeared. An analogous result might be won by a converse process. There were four sublime Raptures founded on the affections.\* These carried the believer out of himself through every region of the universe. He was bidden to let his love

\* Cp. *ante*, pp. 115, 120.

pervade every quarter of the world, the spheres above, and the dark realms below. Love would reveal the pains and sorrows of all animated beings; the sight of suffering in the endless round of transmigration would beget pity; pity would awaken sympathy; and sympathy would teach the equal mind towards all, and everywhere love-burdened thought would make its way, “abounding, sublime, beyond measure, free from hatred and ill-will.” Has such a conception of the unity of all existence no religious value? From the gods, above to the demons below all were involved in the same process, and lived under the same law. Did it make no difference whether the disciple lived for himself alone or entered the mysterious complex of the Whole, sinning, suffering, striving together? In that manifold complex subtle ties linked him—could he but discern them—with the Teachers of past ages, Buddhas who had gone before, and the saints who had followed them, working for the same deliverance. Were they not the forerunners who had borne their testimony to righteousness, and did not their example send forth others in courage and trust? Such was the unseen aid which supported the traveller who toiled with patience along the Eightfold Path, and sought to help his comrades on the way.

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But what, then, of the Buddha who had just passed on beyond his followers' sight? To him they were bound by every tie of reverence and affection. How should they keep his memory in their hearts, and live under his influence though they could no longer hear his words? Tradition represented him as himself prescribing certain pious pilgrimages on the last night of his life, in curious contrast with the austere aims which he had set before them in his ethical discipline. As he lay dying in the Sāla grove of the Mallas, the trees suddenly broke out into flowers out of season. Heavenly blossoms and fragrant powder fell on his person from the sky, and music and song were wafted from above upon the air. Such reverence was paid by celestial watchers to the successor of the Buddhas of old. But it was not thus, he told Ānanda, that he was rightly honoured. The worthiest homage was to fulfil the greater and the lesser duties and walk correctly according to the precepts. Yet after thus repudiating all outward display he announced that he had chosen four places for the reverent visits of disciples—the scene of his birth, the hallowed spot where he had ended his long travail and at last won Supreme Enlightenment, the deer-park at Benares where he had first proclaimed the Truths and set on foot the

Kingdom of Righteousness, and the grove of his solemn decease when his life was ended and there was no re-birth. To any of the faithful who might die upon such pilgrimages he promised bliss in heaven. The incongruity of these injunctions betrays their diversity of date. Tradition must find a direct sanction for usages which had spontaneously arisen. How long it took to incorporate such instructions into the memories of the Teacher's parting words we cannot tell. Christian pilgrims did not begin to seek out the holy sites in Palestine for two centuries after the Crucifixion, and generations may have elapsed before Buddhist practice was sufficiently established to secure a lodgment in the Teacher's own provision. The discovery of the pillar (in 1896) commemorating Asoka's visit to the place of birth in the Lumbini garden proves that the practice was fully recognised two hundred years after the Great Decease.

We have already seen\* how in the same way when the relics were distributed after the Buddha's cremation, the Mallas who had performed the funeral ceremonies divided the ashes into eight parts, and sent them round among the adjoining clans. The Brāhman Dona, to whom the task of allotment had been assigned, received

\* Cp. *ante*, p. 163.

the vessel which had held the remains, and the Moriyas of the Pippali-grove, who had applied for a share too late, had to be content with the embers from the funeral pyre. Over each hallowed fragment was raised a memorial mound and the deposition of the casket within it was celebrated with a solemn feast. There were other sacred spots of earlier cultus at which Gotama himself sometimes stayed, marked perhaps by some upright stone or cairn or venerable tree, to which pious followers brought gifts of flowers. Similar homage gathered round the objects dedicated to the Buddha's memory. Poetry celebrated the treasure of the Three Jewels, the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Order, and as their praises were chanted the spirits of earth and air, to whom offerings were made by day and night, were summoned to listen and attend with joy. There was no order of celebrants, but as the laity gathered on the days of fortnightly observance to hear instruction from the Elders, devout feeling was stirred, the events of the Buddha's life were recited, the precepts were expounded and enforced, difficulties were explained, and the energy needed for keeping the householder unspotted from the world was thus replenished. Here were the conditions out of which the disciple's longing for

communion with his departed Master developed into an ardent cultus which at once expressed and fostered devout emotion.

Opponents, indeed, were not slow to criticise it. "If the Buddha accepts gifts," they argued, "he cannot have passed entirely away." He was not completely severed from the world of sense; if he took pleasure, it was implied, in receiving honours, he had not attained complete detachment. On the other hand, of what use were offerings if no person were really there to receive them? The dilemma was presented by King Milinda to the venerable Nāgasena. Like a great fire, says the sage, which has died down for want of fuel, the glorious flame of the Buddha kindled in the system of the ten-thousand worlds had ceased. But fire still dwelt in the wood from which it could be produced by twirling the fire-stick, and in like manner the believer by doing reverence to the Buddha's attainment of Supreme Enlightenment under the form of his Wisdom might achieve holiness themselves. As a refreshing breeze rises and falls again and all is still, the wind of the Teacher's love had breathed over the ten-thousand worlds, "so cool, so sweet, so calm, so delicate," and died away. Yet for those who were oppressed with heat or tormented with fever, the fan and the

punkah might bring relief, and so the fever and the torment of the threefold heat of lust, ill-will, and infatuation might be allayed by the goodness awakened through the instruction of the Blessed One. Had he not foreseen it himself? Did he not warn Ānanda as death drew nigh, that they should not say "We have no Teacher more"? The Truth he had proclaimed, the Rules he had laid down, would be their Teacher. The Christian saw the living Christ mystically embodied in the Church. The Buddhist saw his departed Master still surviving in his words. The Teaching, the second of the Three Precious Jewels, perpetuated his "Truth-body," and through daily meditation and pious acts of humility and homage his followers sustained the remembrance of the Author of their faith.

The objects which nourished sacred memories were numerous. Around the hallowed tree beneath which Gotama had completed his age-long quest and won the Perfect Insight, the spots where he had rested or taken a meal, or bathed or washed his robes or meditated, were marked by shrines. In the midst of the enclosure was the Adamant Seat, piously regarded as the centre of the world. At the solemn moments in the Buddha's career when the earth quaked, this remained unshaken. How many

other places were consecrated by his presence, such as the deer-park at Benares where he had preached his first sermon, or the spot where he turned back to take his leave of the land of Magadha on his way to die at Kusināra. Then it became a work of piety to build memorial mounds. More and more labour was expended on them. They rose to greater height, they were decorated with railings and gateways on which sculpture could represent scenes of Buddhist story. Far from the original sites they were erected also to commemorate famous saints. Sometimes they simply became pious symbols like the miniature emblems which the Chinese traveller Fa Hien saw at the doors of the houses in Khoten. Happy was the king who could secure a relic. When Prince Mahinda led the mission to Ceylon, after their retreat during the rainy season the brethren longed for something to venerate, and to see their Lord. But had they not declared, asked the king, that the Buddha had passed entirely away? "We see the Conqueror," was the reply, "if we see the relics." Wondrous were the marvels when the right collar-bone, despatched by King Asoka in answer to an urgent message from his son, arrived. In preparation for its deposition in the relic-chamber, over which the dome of the mound

would be reared, a vast concourse was assembled. It rose in the air, sent forth streams of water and of light, and then gently descended on to the king's head. As he reverently laid it in the shrine a mighty earthquake thrilled the multitude with awe. "Thus," exclaims the Chronicler triumphantly, "are the Buddhas incomprehensible, and incomprehensible is the nature of the Buddhas, and incomprehensible is the reward of those who have faith in the incomprehensible."\*

All through the Buddhist Holy Land, and far far beyond, these shrines were multiplied. Just as in a medieval Abbey the relics of a saint drew pilgrim-crowds and costly gifts, so was it in India more than a thousand years before. Under the seals of eight nobles of the highest families in the kingdom of Nagāra, the flat-bone of the Buddha's skull was guarded in the city of Helo (the present Hidda, five miles south of Jelalabad). There the Chinese traveller Fa Hien witnessed the daily ceremony of its exposition. Conches were blown, drums beaten, cymbals clashed. Before giving audience the king performed his worship and made his offerings. The householders followed. At the gates of the enclosure were stalls for the purchase of flowers and incense. From the states around came a

\* *Mahāvamsa*, tr. Geiger (1912), xvii. 56.

constant stream of royal messengers, with gold or jewels for the shrine, or robes and other necessaries for the monks, in honour of the Teacher who had toiled through so many lives for gods and men. In the same region was a cave in a deep gorge, difficult of access, and a bandits' haunt. There, it was believed, the Buddha had left his shadow on the wall. When Yuan Chwang passed through the land on his way to the Holy Places, he sought it out. Stopped by five brigands he was unalarmed. "Robbers," he said, "are human beings; I am going to adore the Buddha," and they let him through. At first it seemed as though his quest was vain. More than a hundred times did he prostrate himself, but he saw nothing. The memory of past sins was grievous, and he confessed them with deep sorrow. He recited passages of Scripture and repeated hymns of praise, till in the agony of his devotion a small circle of light was seen upon the wall, which grew slowly brighter till the Buddha's figure appeared in shining white, like the golden Mount suddenly revealed between opening clouds. To left and right he could discern more shadows of saints. With lowly reverence he summoned six men from outside, bidding them bring fire for burning incense. Five of them gazed upon the

vision, but one could see nothing. The Brāhman guide ascribed the wonder to the pilgrim's faith and prayers. As they returned the five brigands laid aside their arms, received the layman's precepts, and gave up their evil ways.

Many legends were attached to footprints in various lands identified by pious fancy with the Buddha, like the marks still shown upon the Mount of Olives to indicate the spot from which Christ ascended. The feet of the Buddha bore the sacred marks of the Wheel which was the symbol of the Kingdom of Righteousness.. This was the emblem on the upturned soles placed side by side which preceded the actual representation of the sacred figure. The relic and the hallowed mound, the tree of the Enlightenment, served as the first objects of reverent homage. Legend, indeed, told how the King of Kosala, Pasenadi, caused a wooden image to be carved while Gotama had ascended to heaven to preach to his mother, and on his return he sanctioned it as a pattern for the future. The temple at Buddha Gayā (described by Yuan Chwang) contained an image more than eleven feet high, of exceeding dignity, carved in secret by a mysterious Brāhman, who afterwards revealed himself as Maitreya. Historically the symbol of the holy feet only gradually gave way as the influence of

Greek art in the North-West led early in our era to the production of statuary. Gotama had often dwelt in a cave on the Vulture's Peak, and such places of retreat were much used by the brethren in the rainy season. They could be adapted for teaching and religious use. A cave at Karli, for instance, between Bombay and Poona, dated 78 B.C., is 150 feet in length and 45 in height. Its arrangement anticipated that of an early Christian Church. The nave, divided from side aisles by two rows of fifteen pillars each, terminated in an apse round which the aisle was carried. There was no image, but in the apse stood a domed relic shrine. Some 900 of various extent and type have been discovered in India; painting and sculpture were freely employed for their adornment. Here and in the temples a rich and varied worship became possible. The Lotus Buddhism evoked definite emotion towards a living Buddha. There were splendid processions at solemn festivals, with banners, streamers, umbrellas, and jewelled staves, a rain of flowers and clouds of incense. Miracle plays were enacted, and the beneficence of the Buddha in his varied acts of renunciation was kept constantly before the disciple. The pictures of his lowly surrender of wife and child in his Vessantara birth made the rough Scythians weep.

Among the many singular parallels in the imaginative creations of the two religions, one of the most interesting is that between the story of the Buddha's Almsbowl and the mystery of the Holy Grail, the cup from which Jesus drank at the Last Supper. The almsbowl was the symbol of the Teacher's wandering life of self-devotion for the deliverance of man, just as the Bodhi-tree represented his Supreme Enlightenment. During the seven weeks of meditation which followed the Great Attainment, he had needed no food, he had been nourished on joy. On the forty-ninth day two travelling merchants passed by with a caravan of carts, and at the prompting of a spirit-kinsman they offered the Buddha a rice-cake. It was not fitting for the Buddha to receive it in his hands. The four Guardian Angels of the four quarters of the earth, accordingly, each brought a bowl which the Blessed One condescended to accept, and placing them one above another he condensed them into one, with four lines round its rim. After his death it was preserved first in Vesāli, the large and flourishing capital of the Licchavi clan, some twenty-five miles North of the Ganges. Thence it passed mysteriously from place to place, and became an object of devotion. A Chinese catalogue drawn up between A.D. 265 and 313

mentions a "History of the Bowl." A hundred years or so later Fa Hien saw it in the kingdom of Peshawar. It was exhibited in the morning and again at the time of evening incense. The few flowers placed in it by the poor filled it at once; the rich might throw them in by bushels, but it was never full. Long afterwards in Ceylon Fa Hien heard a preacher describe how it would travel through the air from land to land in Central Asia. Pious expectation believed that where religion fell into decay it would appear in glory, emitting rays of five colours, restoring obedience and bringing prosperity. Finally, dishonoured in the decline of faith, it would find a safe refuge in the palace of the serpent-kings beneath the sea, and could only be recovered by a pure monk who should devote himself to the quest; or, according to another version, it would return to the home of the Guardian Angels to be ready for them to present it to Metteyya, the next to attain Supreme Enlightenment.

The Teacher had told Ānanda that the Truth and the Rule should still guide his followers, and a later generation had cherished the Teaching as his body. When the Discourses and the Regulations had been reduced to written form, the actual books then became a medium of communion with him. To read them was to know his

word, to recite them was to make it known to others. No relation could be more intimate. Through it he, being dead, yet spoke. To the Scriptures, then, shrines might be erected. When Fa Hien reached the Holy Land in the Middle Country, he found it full of such objects of devotion. The professors of different divisions of the Canon, whether they belonged to the older or the later schools of the Faith, paid their worship and made their offerings at an annual festival. It was a great day of celebration for the monasteries, when gifts of clothes and necessaries were brought for distribution to the monks. The "Lotus" emphasised the value of such cultus with the utmost insistence. Whoever carried the book on his shoulder carried the Buddha. Flowers and incense, garlands and perfumes, silks, cloth, flags, lamps, should surround it with honour. To read it, to copy it, to teach it, was worth more than all charitable gifts, exceeding even donations of monasteries and gardens; for it secured the blessed vision of the Eternal Buddha as he sat teaching on the Vulture's Peak, surrounded by the Buddhas-to-be and the congregation of the disciples. Such a theme found vivid expression in Japanese art, for example in the famous picture by the Abbot Eshin Sozu Genshin (A.D. 942-1017) in the

Koyasan Monastery,\* which presents so startling an analogy to the Christian art of later centuries. Encircled by the saints the Buddha dwells on high. Ineffable peace and joyous adoration pervade the scene. The great assembly expresses the harmony of perfect wisdom and perfect goodness. Such universal truth made all worlds and all times one. It formed an element in every conscious being, however it might be obscured by evil, and thus set each in relation with every other. The homage to the "Lotus" was not offered to its letter but to its spirit. The formula of reverence or praise uttered with understanding and sincerity was designed to awaken the consciousness in all beings of their interdependence and essential unity in the Buddha-nature.†

## II

What, then, was the Buddha-nature? How was it conceived, what modes of thought gathered round it, and what type of religious life was fostered beneath it?

The metaphysical presentation of the historical Gotama as a manifestation of the Eternal at once involved certain delicate and difficult problems.

\* Now removed to Tokyo.

† Cp. *ante*, p. 224, for the communion of the preacher with the Buddha.

He had been born of human parents, he had grown from a babe to man's estate. He had needed food to support life, and sleep to refresh exhausted energy; and by his death he had shared the common lot. True, his person had been adorned with the Thirty-two Marks of Mahā-Purushā, and was thus distinguished from the bundle of impurities on which the disciple was bidden to concentrate his thought. But it was still human, and its reality was at first unquestioned. Only by degrees did piety suggest that it must have been raised above the ordinary usage of the world, secure from any weakness or defilement. Perhaps it was only a specially created form, sent from on high, while the Buddha himself remained in heaven. In the "Lotus" this tendency was combined with the necessity of providing Buddhas for all the innumerable worlds, and regarding them as all issuing from one ultimate Reality. These myriad forms were only assumed for accommodation, that he might become visible and preach the Truth to gods or men or demons. For the sake of humanity, to heal its sickness, to cure its ills, he seemed to be born, attain Enlightenment, teach, and die. But he was doing the same in all ages and in other spheres. In these appearances he condescended to occupy a body that could

be produced and laid aside. Wrought by his wondrous compassion, to dispel ignorance and conquer sin, it bore the name of Creation-Body.

Such temporary manifestations, however, in no way affected or impaired his central activity. That joy and peace which he seemed to be for ever entering from world to world as he passed into Nirvāna was really his eternal bliss. Religious imagination pictured him as always sending forth the Truth which would rescue the various ranks of beings from their evil plight. The ancient tradition of the Teacher on the Vulture's Peak was idealised into a heavenly counterpart in the centre of the world. There he sat surrounded by the multitude of Buddhas from the distant Buddha-fields, which were in reality so many "self-beings" (as the phrase ran), so many projections of himself, his spiritual essence made visible in radiant forms. And as they circle round the august Centre of Existence, another multitude of Buddhas-to-be attends them. In the language of the elder Indian philosophy they were said to be "made of mind." This majestic aspect of the Eternal came to be known as his "Enjoyment-Body." Two ideas were blended in the vision. The early idea of the Buddha represented him as arriving

at the Truth after an agelong quest. The infinite expansion of the universe in all directions, in time as well as in space, called for the multiplication of Buddhas in corresponding numbers, while others in the same profusion were preparing for the future. And all these issued from the same fount of being, and were maintained by the same ceaseless energy. This operated not along the lines of physical creation and the succession of cosmic phenomena, but as a perpetual organ of Revelation for the universal diffusion of the saving knowledge. "Homage," sang the poet, "to the Enjoyment-Body which develops in the midst of the Assembly for the joy of the meditative saints, his large, manifold, supramundane, uncogitable manifestation, acquired by numberless good actions, which shines into all the Buddha's worlds, which uninterruptedly emits the sublime sound of the Good Law, which is enthroned in the kingship of the Law."\* And the Chinese pilgrim, Fa Hien, bowing before its wondrous union of power and tranquillity, beheld it as a centre of light like the sun illumining air, full of compassion, transforming and saving the multitude of Buddhas-to-be.

\* Tr. Prof. Poussin (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1906, p. 961).

Yet another line of thought led to a third conception. This marvellous universe, stretching through boundless space, with all its dazzling world-systems, its endless series of alternations of growth and decay, its solemn procession of physical events, whether on the minutest or the most complicated scale, marshalled by moral Order—whence did it come, what guided and sustained it? Indian philosophy had long taught at all costs the unity of existence, even if the whole visible scene had to be resolved into spirit, and human personality merged in the universal and divine. The relation of Buddhist speculation to the type of absolute idealism which found its highest expression in the monistic Vedânta of Çankara, must remain uncertain and obscure until more literary evidence can be produced. But through the study of Chinese and Tibetan translations of Sanskrit texts a third aspect of the Buddha comes into view under the name of his *Dharma*-Body. What was its nature? The term *Dharma* has an extraordinary range of meanings. In its Pâli equivalent the *Dhamma*-body, as we have seen,\* denoted the *Teaching*, the “Truth-Body” in which the Buddha still survived for his disciples. And as all past

\* Cp. *ante*, p. 129.

Buddhas had taught the same Truth, the Dhamma was everlasting. The unity of the Dhamma was soon reflected on to the succession of the Buddhas: If the revelation was always the same, the Revealers could not be different. In other words, behind an eternal Dhamma stood an Absolute and Eternal Buddha.

In the light of this sublime figure the *Dharma*-Body acquired a wholly new meaning. Its application to the historical Gotama was changed. It was withdrawn from the sphere of morality and religion, and taken into the abstract region of metaphysics. There the term *Dharma* denoted the characteristic quality of an object, its distinctive mark, and behind these the nature or essential being thus manifested in them. Applied to the Eternal Buddha it designated the sum of all his infinite activities. In himself unchanging he was for ever at work, evolving, upholding, and destroying worlds. The constant flow of his power produced each event of our experience from hour to hour. There was the source of the energy to which space could set no limits, which time could not exhaust, nor any opposition baffle. Nothing could escape its range or fall out of its order. The Law of the Deed was embodied in it. The sublime Justice which for ever rendered to everyone according to his works was of its

essence. Its sovereign rule spread everywhere, pervaded everything, and guaranteed the ultimate union of all finite beings in the peace and joy of the Buddha-nature.

Thus conceived the *Dharma*-Body was no dead self-acting force. It was not blind or unintelligent. Pervading the innumerable systems comprised in the universe as an omnipresent immanent energy, it provided the medium in which all ranks of existence could "live and move and have their being." But it was also the source of the Supreme Enlightenment, the Absolute Wisdom, the Perfect Goodness, of all the Buddhas. Herein lay the common element of character which made all the Buddhas One, transcending all appearances of birth and death. The mysterious essence known as the *Dharma*-Body thus became the object of the believer's devout adoration. He meditated on it, and on his own participation in it, with a solemn joy. To practise the moral disciplines and the spiritual concentration which would bring him into conscious communion with it, was his religious duty. "Homage to the incomparable *Dharma*-Body of the Conquerors," sang the philosophical poet, "which is neither one nor multiple, which supports the great blessing of salvation for oneself and for one's neighbour . . . unique in its

kind, diffused, transcendent, and to be known by everyone in himself.”\*

The hymns of the Great Vehicle are full of the praises of this transcendent Being. The triple forms or bodies of his Manifestation, Beatitude, and Essence, have sometimes been compared with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. But the analogy is not based on the conception of Persons or corresponding functions and relations, it is really only founded on the number three. Hindu theology with its union of Brahmā, Vishnu, and Civa in the *Trimūrti* or Triple Form, employed the same figure, and its common use may have been due to vague suggestion or mutual affinities of thought. Some remote likeness there was between the *Dharma*-Body and its Buddhas on the one hand and God and the Logos on the other. The infinite Reality is the home of all the ideas which constitute this visible scene, and the multitudinous successions of the Buddhas in their several worlds are in like manner projections of his wisdom and love. So the hymn affirmed—

“ As through the power of one mind  
 A host of thoughts is evolved,  
 So from one *Dharma*-Body of Tathāgata  
 Are produced all the Buddha-bodies.

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\* Tr. Poussin, *ibid.*, p. 955.

All the Buddhas of the present, past, and future,  
Each one of them is an issue of the Dharma-Body  
immaculate and pure;  
Manifesting themselves in all forms,  
They teach and convert all sentient creatures."\*

As it manifests itself in the variety of conscious beings, it is free from all passions and prejudices, and illuminates all good works, secular as well as religious. But there are gradations of moral stature and enlightenment just as there are differences of height on the earth's surface. "When the day breaks," says the preacher, "the rising sun shines first on the peaks of all the higher mountains, then on those of high mountains, and finally all over the plains and fields. But the sun does not think to itself, 'I will shine first on the highest mountains, and then gradually ascending higher shine on the plains and fields.' " Even so is it with the rays of the Light of Intelligence issuing from the Buddha's *Dharma-Body*. They will fall first on the Buddhas-to-be, and then on rank after rank of spiritual maturity, on the disciples, the worthy laity, and common folk of indifferent character, providing them with conditions which will prove

\* Suzuki, *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism* (1907), p. 376. The term *Tathāgata*, the Saint who has attained truth, is applied preeminently to the Buddha.

beneficial in their future births. But the Light does not think to itself, "I will first shine on the Buddhas-to-be and then gradually pass on to ordinary men"; it is universal, but it is apprehended diversely according to varieties of disposition.\* And its ultimate victory over the darkness of false doctrine, of ignorance, of transgression of the Buddha's precepts, is secure. The blind will rid themselves of their impurities, and gradually mount to better life, for the hymn ran—

"The Tathâgata is the great leader of beings;  
 With skill that is excellent and marvellous,  
 Guiding all those ignorant souls,  
 He bringeth them by degrees to Enlightenment."†

The world is a process of divine education. The visible scene, the events of life, are continually being adjusted under the Law of the Deed to the moral condition of its manifold ranks; and just as in filth and mud the lotus grows and blooms, so in a heart defiled with evil Karma the seeds of the Buddha-nature are growing.

There is, then, a Reality in which all conscious

\* Suzuki, *Outlines of Mahâyâna Buddhism* (1907), p. 227 f.

† *Ibid.*, p. 379.

beings live and move, itself immovable as the great mountain of the earth, Sumēru. To see the One in the Many, and to see the Many in the One, are the two phases of the insight which leads to deliverance. For the truth must ultimately prevail. There was once a mansion, said a parable, which was a hundred thousand years old. It had no occupant, nor doors or windows. All of a sudden came a lamp and burned, and the darkness that had dwelt so long departed instantly and never said in anger, "I have lived here for ages, and I will never be removed from this place." Even though there be a horde of passions in the heart, though they have lived there many hundred thousand ages, their ultimate nature is not true nor real, and before Reality they must give way. Like the steadfast Earth which sustains and nourishes all beings, seeking favour from none nor partial to any, so does the Buddha-to-be, embracing friend and enemy with single heart, fashion one and all for Enlightenment. Like water fertilising all seeds, or warmth maturing all tender shoots, or air providing breath of life for all lands, so universal is the beneficence with which the Buddha-to-be proclaims the Teaching to the Buddha's sons. Pointing to the vicissitudes of transmigration through the long succession of ages, the

wise thinker reflected not only that all conscious beings should feel mutual goodwill as sharers in an ultimate Buddha-nature, but that some now living might once have been fathers and mothers to their present contemporaries :

“ While not yet requiting their love received in your prior lives,  
 Why should ye, thinking otherwise, harbour enmity?  
 Ever thinking of love, endeavour ye to benefit one another,  
 And provoke ye not hostility, quarrelling, and insulting each other.”\*

Of the *Dharma*-Body thus described, source of intelligence and will, fountain of love and compassion, wherein all beings abide, we read unsurprised that it is without form, but we are further told that it is destitute of all attributes, and that in it agent and action are “ void.” We are on the track of a metaphysical doctrine attached to the name of a great thinker, Nāgarjuna, perhaps about A.D. 200. In the type of speculation which he inaugurated an ethical term of early Buddhism received a fresh application. The heart in which the fires of lust, hatred, and stupidity had been extinguished, had conquered evil; perturbing in-

\* Suzuki, *Outlines of Mahāyāna Buddhism* (1907), p. 382.

fluences had been dispersed; temptation troubled it no more; it was free from all interference with its peace. The room which had been occupied by passion, ill-will, and infatuation was empty; in technical language it was "void," and tranquillity, love, and insight could enter in. The "void" thus became a term descriptive of Buddhist holiness. By what process it was transferred to the field of metaphysics we do not know. But it appears there in a double sense. In a world of incessant change where consciousness had no continuance and a stream of phenomena flowed on unceasingly, there was no true Being. The scene of our experience with all its contents, Karma and its consequences, the Buddha and his Teaching, all were involved in universal negation. Philosophy might construct for them a scheme of relative truth, and confer upon them a seeming reality, but they were intrinsically empty, plunged in the Void. What, then, became of the *Dharma-Body*? The believer was bidden to rise to the height of Absolute Truth, and contemplate the Primal Unity in which all distinctions were lost. Here differences were transcended and opposites disappeared. All concrete forms and individual existences vanished in vacuity. The *Dharma-Body* had no marks discriminating it from other

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forms. Including everything it could be defined by nothing. The shapes and moulds in which we cast the groups and kinds of our knowledge were all shattered. The rivers in the valley all flow into one ocean which has everywhere the same taste. In face of a reality which embraced both "mine" and "thine," the bitternesses of animosity were childish and futile. Let a man learn that in the Higher Unity *Samsāra* and *Nirvāna* were the same. Did not the Void comprise them both? With the love of driving abstraction to its utmost possible limits the *Dharma*-Body was declared to be above both existence and non-existence, the empty and the non-empty, the unreal and the Real.

Here was an ultimate metaphysical conception curiously parallel with one which flowed from Neoplatonism into Christianity, and so powerfully influenced some of the mystics of the West. Somewhere about A.D. 500 an unknown writer who had learned of Proclus composed a series of treatises under the name of Dionysius the Elder to his fellow Elder Timothy. They were accepted for many centuries as the work of the Athenian convert of St. Paul (Acts xvii. 34). They set forth the angelic hierarchies of heaven, and the sacerdotal hierarchy of the Church; each with a ninefold order of ministration; the names of God

in Scripture and what might be learned from them; and concluded with a discourse on Mystical Theology. The doctrine of the Trinity, which had the sanction of Revelation, belonged to the sphere of assertive or affirmative theology. But Dionysius found in philosophy a way to climb still higher, a *via negationis*, a path of denial, which reached a yet more exalted negative theology. Had not Plato seen a vision of a Beyond, transcending even the highest Good? So Dionysius passing behind the eternal relation of the Father and Son, the Infinite Thinker and his Everlasting Thought, fixed his gaze on the Abyss of Being containing both. No intellectual notion could be formed of it. As the Superessential Essence it admitted of no definition, could be expressed in no predicate. Dionysius dared to call it a Reason that did not reason, a Word that could not be uttered, the absolute Non-Existent which is above all Existence. Here is the Christian equivalent of the Buddhist "Void." Indian imagination—or are we to call it logical abstraction?—made its difficult ascent to a yet further transcendence above the Void and the Non-Void, Being and Not-Being, into a Unity which covered even this contradiction. Dionysius found its counterpart in "a Unity which unified every unity." For the Buddhist the two terms

were complementary. The Void was a negation of all limits belonging to the sphere of the temporal and unreal. The Non-Void was an affirmation of the divine Self-Existence, Wisdom, Love.

For both philosophies God was "the Being of all that is." The phrase included in some sense the relative reality of our experience as well as the transcendental reality of the Divine Substance. In God's world was God, then, the author of evil? For the Indian thinkers this problem was relieved by the conception of Karma. No imagination could reach a beginning in the eternal past. There was no origin of evil, any more than of nature or man. The stream of worlds and ages and generations had flowed on for ever, and all its incidents of calamity and pain had been wrought in the Moral Order, and only brought on the sufferer the consequences of his own deeds. Viewed as the "Lotus" teaching came to view it, this was itself part of the Buddha's training of his children, for when their eyes were opened to its sequences they rose above them and sinned no more. There was a sense, therefore, in which the Buddhist might have adopted the Dionysian maxim, "God sees evil as good"; not, indeed, in the sense that evil is good in the wrong place, no thing on its own account, but as a necessary

element in the training of conscious beings on the way to realise their essential Buddha-nature. For Dionysius, also, as God was the source of all things, so he must be their goal. Had not the Apostle taught that even as all things were “out of him” they would also be “unto him”? If from him they flowed forth, to him they would return. This was the theme of the translator of the Dionysian treatises in the ninth century, John the Scot, whom we know best by the name Erigena. He reproduced the ideas and terminology of Dionysius with the help of the preposition *super*. Dwelling in inaccessible light God is exalted in his intrinsic being above all creation. He is the super-true, the super-wise, the super-good, the super-mighty. Super-essential, what he is cannot be apprehended, he simply *is*. Whatever may be predicated of him applies to him only in an improper sense. When the affirmative theology declares the existence in him of all perfections present in creation, it asserts these attributes in allegory or by transference. Negative theology proceeds with greater truth and fitness, for God is more than “substance”; space cannot hold him, for he is without position; nor can time contain him, for he is above all change. He neither acts nor suffers; loves not, nor is beloved; immeasurable

and without qualities, rest and motion are identical to him. Erigena pushes Augustine's phrase, *melius scitur nesciendo*, "he is best known by unknowing," to its utmost bound of metaphysical extravagance, when he declares that God may not unfitly be described as *Nihilum*, or "No-thing." Yet he, too, cannot be satisfied without the ultimate victory of Reality. Plotinus had not looked for any grand conclusion to this earthly scene. The divine energy which had flowed forth to the utmost confines of existence would not flow back again to its source. But Erigena read in his New Testament of the Restoration of all things, when God should be all in all (Acts iii. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 28). In some sort the divine wisdom and love had always 'been present in creation. It contained an element of good which must in fine overcome all evil. If the divine goodness which ever worketh well not only in the good but also in the wicked is eternal and infinite, it follows that its contrary will not be eternal and infinite. Evil, therefore, will have its consummation, none will remain in any nature, since the divine goodness will be manifest in all. As he wrestled with the terrible language of the Gospels about æonian fire, he employed a fine astronomic image to illustrate his hope. The earth's shadow, which we call night,

projected into space in conical shape, comes to an end, according to the teaching of the time, at a distance of 126,000 stadia. Even so the evil which occupies our nature like a shadow of our faults will be constrained by the heavenly goodness and altogether ended, while the irrational movements of the human soul will be converted into rational affections of truth. The world will be resolved back into the realm of the divine ideas, and all wills, once evil, will be harmonised in the Eternal Peace.

Once again, between four and five hundred years later, the same strain is heard. In Thüringen and Bohemia, in the Rhine valley at Strasburg and Cologne, the Dominican monk, Meister Eckhart, passes to and fro speaking of the "Nameless Nothing," the "Wordless Godhead," the "Divine Dark." We need not dwell on this famous distinction between the Godhead and God. Like Dionysius and Erigena he passes behind the visible universe as the expression of God's thought, behind the distinction between the Father and the Son, the Father as the Fountain of all things, and the image of them all in him as the Son, back to the furthest recesses of Being, containing the potencies of all difference ready for development in the eternal utterance of the Word. Here once more is the Buddhist

*Dharma*-Body. And even as the Great Vehicle taught that it dwelt in all beings, and the purpose of the Buddhas was to make them realise their participation in the Buddha-nature, so did Eckhart teach that man's soul contained something which was above the soul, simple, unnamed, divine. Early in the history of the Church the martyr Justin had applied the Psalmist's phrase, "I said ye are gods," to the Christians who had received in baptism the gift of eternal life. The idea appealed powerfully to devout imagination, and recurs again and again in patristic writings, receiving its most pointed expression in the epigrammatic phrase of Athanasius, "God became man that man might become God." Through many phases, aided by Aristotelian philosophy and the conception of grace, this recognition of a divine element in human nature, whether sacramentally infused or intrinsic in the soul's inmost being, reached the medieval theologians. Through Eckhart's preaching it became characteristic of German mysticism, and appears in the sermons of Tauler, in Suso, and Ruysbroek, and in the *Theologia Germanica*, which Luther prized so highly. When Eckhart pleaded, "Our Lord says to every living soul, 'I became man for you, if you do not become God for me you do me

wrong,''" he expressed in the most vivid form of Christian faith the fundamental conviction of the ultimate harmony of the created nature with the Creator, which breathes in the Buddhist promise, "Ye shall all become Buddhas."

### III

The theology of the Void was not inconsistent with an ardent religious life. In the abundant literature of the school this was summed up in such terms as the "Heart of Intelligence" or the "Thought of Enlightenment." Its purpose was to attain the higher wisdom of a Buddha-to-be, and thus share in the labour of universal deliverance. This was facilitated by a doctrine of which some traces appear even in the austere ethical individualism of the older Buddhism, as well as in the Brāhmanism which surrounded it. Human weakness looks to the holiness of another to supply its own deficiencies. The Law of the Deed kept a self-acting profit and loss account continually running for every traveller through the succession of existences. But this could be modified if the merits of another could be placed to his credit in the column of righteousness. Even Israel could plead the merits of the patriarchs. The Catholic drew on the treasury of the sufferings and the excellences of the saints.

The Evangelical was content to rely on the supreme sacrifice of Christ. The later Buddhist philosophy justified this transference by the help of the conception of the *Dharma-Body*. In all beings there was a fundamental unity of life. Depending on the Hidden Reality, they all shared according to their several degrees in a common nature. A mysterious possibility of communion knit them all together. Even the Buddhas themselves had perhaps once been gnats and worms. The love and wisdom of the *Dharma-Body* was reflected in the hearts of the depraved as well as in those of the pure, just as the moon was reflected in the still, clear lake or in the muddy pool. To labour for the welfare of others became the highest duty of religion, and he should count himself happy whose toils and pains should win sinners from their ways. The cultivation of the Thought of Enlightenment was urged by Nāagarjuna on the disciples of the philosophy of the Void, and the theme was renewed again and again in successive generations. In the seventh century a writer named Cāntideva composed a little book to serve as a sort of Guide to the Life of a Buddha-to-be.\* He looked out on his fellow-men and saw sorrow following on sorrow

\* Tr. by Poussin, *Bodhi-Caryāvatāra* (1907), and Dr. L. D. Barnett, *The Path of Light* (abridged, 1909).

—years spent in vain strivings for existence and health, in hunger, labour, and sleep, in vexation and fruitless commerce with fools, and he longed to bring peace to sufferings, and open the higher vision to ignorance. This is no book of cloistered virtue like the “*Imitation of Christ*.” The author is not confined to an anchorite’s cell. He has fought his own battles, overcome his own passions and ambitions, and won his own victories, and in the detachment of a homeless wanderer he has learned the value of freedom. The quiet of the forest-glade, the shelter of the cave, the beauty of the moonlight, support his tranquillity; he should no more be concerned if the praise of men is withheld than a child should cry when its house of sand is broken down. He lives with the consciousness of innumerable past lives behind him; it has been very hard to get the good birth of manhood; he looks forward through an immeasurable future, for it will be harder still to reach the rank of a Buddha-to-be. But it is the effort of a heart of love, not imposed by superior authority, but prompted by the vision of the pain and sin around him, and the endeavours of those who had devoted themselves to the liberation of the bondmen of evil. The husbandmen, the outcasts, the fishers, bore cold and heat for a mere livelihood; “Why should not

I suffer," cries Çāntideva, "for the weal of the world?"

Such a purpose brought with it many trials. What forbearance was needed with opposition, what patience to meet ill-will! The champion in this warfare would find Love of Right, Constancy, Joy, his comrades in the fight; and the battle was waged in sight of the Buddhas and the Buddhas-to-be who keep unfailing watch in every place. "Everything is before them," he says, "I stand in their presence"; and when Remembrance waits on guard at the portal of the mind, Watchfulness enters and is never tempted away. In their fellowship the tension of high resolve is never relaxed. The past might have its bitter memories of transgression, selfishness, ill-will, lack of joy in the great festivals of worship; but it was possible to undo the occasions of undoing, and in the maintenance of his vow he would neither slumber nor faint. When once he had learned that this manifold universe had its sorrow and joy in common, he would be ready to treat the pain of another as his own. This led straight to what was known as "equality of self and others," and begot the paradoxical warning, "If thou lovest thyself, thou must have no love of self; if thou wouldst save thyself, thou dost not well to be saving of

self.' It is the Buddhist version of "dying to live," and prompted the demand for the willing transference of personal merit to others, who would thus be lifted out of the suffering which their misdeeds had brought upon them. And this was really a moral process. The wisdom and love which flowed forth from the *Dharma-Body* into the hearts ready to receive it, were of no private possession, they could be turned to universal benefit, and made available for all. Individual souls were not independent of each other. They sprang from a common source and possessed a common nature. They had travelled together along the great road of existence; they were all alike subjects of the Law of the Deed, and though the powers of evil might contaminate and corrupt, the gifts of self-denying good were potent to elevate and save. The transfer of merit really produced a new righteousness in the sinner, and along these lines of the communion of all beings, the perpetual teaching of the Truth, and the purpose of untiring helpfulness, arose the faith in the final deliverance of all. The same conviction of the might of good led the great Christian teacher Origen in the third century of our era at Alexandria to look forward confidently through æon after æon to the redemption of the ministers of Hell.

Life conceived in the spirit of Cāntideva was full of earnest purpose and devout reverence. To the same age belongs the record of the visit of the Chinese pilgrim, Yuan Chwang, to the great university of Nālandā (A.D. 637). He had come to study the sacred books at the centre of Buddhist learning. He had spent seven years upon the journey, and encountered many dangers; at Nālandā he was received with the highest honours, and found himself in a haven of peace. Tracing its history back to a grove or park originally presented to Gotama, not far from Rājagāha, the capital of the kingdom of Magadha, south of the Ganges, a vast establishment had grown through the endowments of successive kings. Architecture and sculpture had been employed with all the resources of wealth and skill. The principal gateway, on the west, was surmounted by a tower so high that it made I-Ching, who resided there ten years soon after Yuan Chwang's visit, giddy to look at it. Within the spacious enclosure were a multitude of temples and shrines scattered among shady groves, standing in secluded gardens, or placed beside deep translucent pools, filled with blue lotus and crimson *kanaka*. Prominent among them on a spot where Gotama had dwelt was a temple 200 feet in height, and not far off was another 100 feet yet higher. Over

a colossal copper statue of the Buddha which rose to 80 feet (it must have been one of the wonders of the world) was reared a pavilion of six stories. These richly adorned towers with fairy-like turrets were often veiled in morning mists, and seemed to Yuan Chwang to soar above the clouds. Eight halls, each holding a congregation of some three hundred, provided opportunities for daily worship; clergy and students met to give and receive instruction in a hundred lecture rooms. There were libraries and store-chambers, kitchens and stables, and six immense blocks of dormitories where rooms were allotted from time to time both to the resident brethren and to the students and visitors who came and went without cessation. Yuan Chwang reckoned them altogether at ten thousand. They were drawn from all parts of India by the renown of the teachers for learning and piety. Some kind of test for admission seems to have been imposed, and the standard was high. Seven or eight out of every ten retired defeated, unable to take part in the debates by which instruction was conducted. • •

Life at Nālandā was grave and strenuous, but it had its pleasures as well as its toils. The revenues of a hundred villages were assigned for the support of the community, and Yuan Chwang

noted the daily supply of rice and milk and butter. For himself a special kind of aromatic rice was provided. He could wander among the gardens and groves, admiring the splendid buildings, or enjoying the glitter as the jewels on the shrines flashed in the sunlight; or on the elephant placed at his disposal with a suitable attendant he could make excursions to sites of hallowed memory in the neighbourhood. He was not there, however, for enjoyment but for study. The brethren were renowned through all India for their strictness in observing the rules of the Order. Grave, earnest, decorous, "learning and discussing they found the day too short." An immense educational tradition, far older than Buddhism itself, lay behind them. The teaching was conducted partly by recitations of the sacred texts, partly by expository lectures and disputations. "From morning till night," recorded Yuan Chwang, "they engage in discussion; the old and the young mutually help one another." The range of study was considerable. It included the Vedic literature and other books of religion and philosophy. There were professors of arithmetic and mathematics (perhaps also astronomy), geography and medicine. We miss, indeed, the encyclopaedic view attained by

European thinkers in the thirteenth century, and there had been no Aristotle to infuse the spirit of science. But the outlook was broad and generous. Yuan Chwang reckoned a thousand brethren who could explain twenty collections of texts; five hundred who could teach thirty; perhaps ten (including himself) who could explain fifty; the venerable Chancellor of the University, Cīlabhadra, alone was master of the entire number. During his second visit (A.D. 642) a Brāhman of a sceptical sect posted forty theses at the great gate, and announced that if anyone could refute them he would give his head to the victor. Several days passed, and as none of the resident brethren answered the challenge, Yuan Chwang at last sent an attendant to take the theses down and trample them under foot. The Brāhman had not expected the Master of the Law to enter the lists against him, and desired to evade his challenge. But the Chinese visitor insisted on a discussion. In the presence of the Chancellor and a great assembly of the monks the theses were refuted, and the Brāhman sat silent and moody, unable to reply. At length he rose and admitted his defeat, "I am ready to abide by the compact." "We sons of the Buddha," replied Yuan Chwang, "take the life

of no man.’’ He made the Brāhmaṇa his servant, studied with his aid a difficult Sanskrit text, and then set him free.

The daily devotion in the monasteries described by I-Ching was very simple. The ordinary service came late in the afternoon or at the evening twilight. The gates of the precincts were opened and a procession of the brethren came forth to an adjacent shrine. They bore incense and flowers, marched round the shrine three times, and then all knelt while one of their number chanted hymns in honour of the Great Teacher. On their return to the monastery Scripture-lessons were read, a ‘‘Service in three Parts’’ being often used, to which the congregation responded with ‘‘Well spoken’’ or ‘‘Well done.’’ The final hymn was a prayer that the good merits of the worshippers might be brought to maturity. The father of Buddhist hymnody was named Mātricheta, and his two hymns—one of 150 couplets and another of 400—celebrating the Buddha’s perfections, set a standard of devotional composition which the poets of the Great Vehicle readily followed. All over India the young disciples who had learned the simple Precepts of Morality were instructed in them. And I-Ching expressly tells us that they were taught in the schools of both the Great and

Little Vehicles. At Nālandā there were similar devotions, accommodated to the residential conditions. A band of servants and children carrying incense and flowers went from hall to hall under the guidance of a precentor to lead the worship of the congregations, while others preferred solitary meditation facing one of the temples and praising the Buddha in their hearts. Nālandā imposed no tests of orthodoxy. There were monks of the earlier Buddhism in remote localities who felt as if the followers of the later type professed a different religion. They laboured and learned side by side at Nālandā. The eighteen schools already developed in Asoka's day, nearly nine hundred years before, had their teachers and students. But the divergences of metaphysical interpretations between the humanitarian and theistic types of doctrine created no opposition. There was no jealousy or estrangement dividing the residents into hostile camps. They had a common ethic, and practised common moral disciplines. They could unite in common praise and aspiration. In freedom they learned not only mutual toleration but sympathy and goodwill.

The external aspects of Buddhist worship to-day in China are nearly a thousand years old. Most of the pagodas date from the great revival

under the Sung dynasty in the tenth and eleventh centuries; like so many of the parish churches in England when the great building age began with the Norman conquest. As there is no territorial organisation they are not evenly distributed. In great cities and sacred centres temples may be counted by hundreds; elsewhere they are rare. It is still a work of piety to build new ones. With their adjacent monasteries many are among the finest buildings in China. They contain vast halls, smaller chapels, and corridors. Statues of the Buddha, perhaps fifty feet in height, seated on lotus thrones, look forth on the worshippers with inexpressible tranquillity. Here is neither self-satisfaction nor indifference, but the peace of wisdom, holiness, and love. The eighteen great disciples, or saints perhaps as many as five hundred, stand around. Terracotta groups, like those in an Italian *sacro monte*, present scenes in the Buddha's life from birth to death, the terrors of hell, the bliss of heaven. The great monasteries possess extensive buildings, refectories, dormitories, guest-halls, libraries, cloisters. Daily services begin at 4 a.m.; they are renewed at 9, and completed in the afternoon or evening. There is a rich cultus before altars loaded with flowers and ablaze with light. Processions of splendidly robed figures pass in and out; bells

ring, censers are swung, celebrants prostrate themselves, to the music of ancient litanies. An annual round of ceremonies preserves the remembrance of the Buddha's condescension in submitting to the conditions of humanity, and homage is offered to the great Buddhas-to-be, Maitreya, Avalokiteçvara, Mañjuçrī. The monks occupy themselves in cultivating their lands, in teaching the young, in the production of books by the printing press, and in the tendance of animals. Long rows of stables may be seen where cows and sheep and swine are pensioned under associations formed for their maintenance. Outside the monastery are services of various kinds for the laity, the ritual of the dead, charms and exorcisms and spells for rain. Similar practices have not been unknown in Latin Christendom.\*

The daily manuals of devotions parallel with those of Catholic piety present a type of well-ordered life, grave, reverent, self-controlled, beneficent. In the morning let the monk on waking recite a sacred verse, "On first awaking from my sleep I ought to pray that every breathing thing may wake to saving wisdom, vast as the wide and boundless universe." The sound of

\* In Tibet amid other developments elements magic and demonology are still more prominent.

the convent bell, the acts of rising from bed, and washing, dressing, walking forth, are each to be accompanied with similar prayers; entrance into the temple, homage to the Buddha, reading the Scriptures, all prompt similar aspirations. Some of the brethren may be dull, ignorant, lazy, occasionally immoral. Some have been criminals seeking asylum; parents may have dedicated a sickly child; opium sometimes seizes its prey. But the long list of Chinese philanthropies shows that from whatever motives Buddhism has played no insignificant part in common life. It has constantly enjoined works of compassion and goodwill. It has established hospitals and foundling asylums, planted schools, organised burial societies and insurance clubs. Like the medieval guilds in this country it has promoted enterprises for public welfare, declaring it meritorious to make roads and build bridges. It has distributed food to the poor, and succoured the widow and the orphan. Such beneficence might have its sordid side; as when the French nun told her patient that she only tended him *pour faire son salut*. But the literature of devotion is not planned upon these lines. It never left out of sight the welfare of all beings.

In the year 1412 the reigning Emperor of the

Ming dynasty contributed a preface to the liturgy of the Great Compassionate Kwan-yin, the Chinese name of the Indian Avalokiteçvara. It was to be recited on the three seventh days of the month. The imperial writer laid stress on the due provision of the necessary adjuncts of the worship, but his especial emphasis fell on the proper preparation of the heart, the maintenance of devout thoughts at the hour of prayer instead of "a confused way of going through external duties," and the avoidance of indifferent conversation, gossiping and babbling, after the service, likely to impair the impression of its solemnity. How much some of its elements may have been shaped through contact with Catholic devotion, what was the antiquity of its collects, it is impossible to say. But the community of spirit between this type of Buddhism and Christianity in the following confession cannot be ignored :

" We, and all men from the very first, by reason of the grievous sins we have committed in thought, word, and deed, have lived in ignorance of all the Buddhas, and of any way of escape from the consequences of our conduct. We have followed only the course of this evil world, nor have we known aught of Supreme Wisdom; and even now, though enlightened as to our duty, yet, with others, we still commit heavy sins, which prevent us from advancing in true knowledge. Therefore in the presence of Kwan-yin, and the Buddhas of the ten regions, we would humble ourselves and repent us of

our sins. Oh that we may have strength to do so aright, and that they may cause all obstacles to be removed."

The service concluded with "these three forms of devout worship":

"I pray for all men that they may attain perfection of Wisdom.

I pray that all men may be deeply versed in the Wisdom of the Sacred Books, and acquire Perfect Knowledge.

I pray that all men may agree in the great principles of truth, and maintain peace, and reverence the Church (or Sangha)."<sup>\*</sup>

Between September and November the roads from one monastery to another are often thronged with bands of pilgrims, monks and laymen. Handbooks of information provide details of travel like medieval *Itineraria*, and add counsels of piety for spiritual progress. Three precepts at the head of such a Guide sum up the fitting temper:

"Regard all living things with love and pity:  
Keep your mind free from evil thoughts:  
Let your mind be directed unswervingly to Buddha."

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\* Beal, *Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese* (1871), p. 398 ff. The late Dr. Timothy Richard told me that he had several times witnessed the service, and (like Beal himself) had been much impressed with its devotional character.

The Christian traveller on the path of life may find some of its maxims not inharmonious with his own experience :

“ When on pilgrimage it is not fitting to count the time spent in travelling ; look on the road as your home for the time being. Cherishing a frank joyousness in your heart, pursue day by day your wanderer’s path. Keep your thoughts directed to the way of truth, and fling aside all ideas of fame or personal profit. . . .

“ It should be remembered that the proper object of the pilgrim’s quest is truth ; he must not expect to find his task an easy one. In this world of ours we cannot hope that heaven will make Buddhas of us for the asking. It is not till the plum-tree has endured the icy rigours of winter that its blossoming time will come. It is not till the pilgrim has won his way with zeal and courage through all the pains and woes of human life that he can hope to attain the objects of his quest. Ponder earnestly the teachings of the wise.”\*

#### IV

Many were the different schools which Chinese Buddhism produced between the first and the sixteenth centuries. Among them two stand out prominently both on historic and religious grounds, which may be summarily discriminated as Contemplation and Faith.

\* Cp. Mr. R. F. Johnston, *Buddhist China* (1913), chap. vii.

Early Buddhism had borrowed from contemporary teachers the practice of certain Meditations or Raptures under the name of *Jhāna* (Sanskrit *Dhyāna*).\* Chinese translations are already occupied with them in the second century of our era in the form of *Chan*, which in due time passed into Japan as *Zen*. This type of mental exercise was kindred with the discipline by which the believer realised through the Dharma-Body the ultimate unity of the Buddhahood. It was not to be gained by ritual. No pious ceremonies, laborious devotions, or ascetic penances, could secure it. Inward vision alone could behold it. Sink into silence, let no worldly sights distract your calm, and you may "see into the life of things." That was impossible, so the teachers of Contemplation knew, without the power of harmony, nor did they wholly forget "the deep power of joy." Legend told of the Buddha seated in glory on the Vulture's Peak, surrounded by a vast multitude of saints in adoring gladness. One of the great Brahmā angels offered him a golden flower, and asked him to proclaim the Truth. The Buddha took the flower, held it aloft in his hand, and gazed at it in silence. At length one of his most

\* *Ante*, p. 142.

eminent disciples, Kācyapa, turned to him and smiled. He divined the secret. A single flower truly comprehended, root and all, plucked out of the crannies, supplied the explanation of the whole. In Western language he understood what God and man is. So Kācyapa received what was called "the Heavenly Eye," and transmitted it in turn to Ānanda. Through him it passed, according to Chinese tradition, from one teacher to another till it reached the twenty-eighth in succession, Bodhidharma.

Son of a king in South India, Bodhidharma came to China about A.D. 520. The Emperor Wu, an enthusiastic Buddhist, invited him to his court, but learned nothing from the abrupt answers of the sage to his questions. The elephant, observes a Japanese historian, can hardly keep company with rabbits. Bodhidharma finally settled in a monastery, and spent nine years in meditation with his face to the wall, thereby earning the name of "the Wall-gazer." "You will not find Buddha in images or books," he taught; "look into your own heart, that is where you will find Buddha." As in the wisdom of Israel the Chinese word for heart covers the activities of thought or mind. Mr. Johnston has pointed out the affinities of such language with

that of many Christian mystics. Augustine knew the secret well, *In te ipsum redi, in interiore homine habitat veritas*. The Victorines taught the same lesson. "If thou wishest to search out the deep things of God," said Richard, "search out the depths of thine own spirit"; and Hugh wrote, "The way to ascend to God is to descend into oneself." There are differences of terminology, but parallels of experience. "'Sink into thyself and thou will find him,' said Eckhart. Find whom? Christ. 'Sink into thyself and thou wilt find him,' said Bodhidharma. Find whom? Buddha."\*

The tendency of the Contemplative school was to disparage ceremonial, Scripture, learning, and even the teacher's instruction. Its methods produced various disciplines, ethical and meditative, designed to free the disciple's mind from reliance on images and reliques, dogmas and books. One of the most famous branches arose among the mountains and valleys of Tien-tai, 180 miles south-west of Hangchow. There, half a century after Bodhidharma came to China, one of his successors planted a monastery round which other pious foundations were established, till it became one of the most important centres

\* Johnston, *Chinese Buddhism*, p. 85.

of Chinese Buddhism. Numbers of Japanese students resorted thither in the days of Bernard and Francis and Dominic, and returned to apply its lessons in their own country. They were among the formative powers of the Samurai character. The monasteries of this type became the homes of useful arts. They are said to have led the way in the education of the people. Their training in bodily control, endurance, poverty, courage, and composure of mind, provided the type for feudal chivalry known as Bushido. Scholars and statesmen, poets and artists, warriors and swordsmen, all rapped at monastery doors and practised *zen*. The modern Japanese finds a pre-eminent example of its spirit in the solemn act of General Nogi, who, after his two sons had perished in the Russian war, gave up his own and his wife's life in loyalty to his deceased emperor. That is the soldier's homage. The preacher, naturally, conceives a different aim, and interprets the true purpose of life as "a man's becoming conscious through personal experience of the ultimate nature of his inner being. This insight breaks as it were the wall of intellectual limitation, and brings us to a region which has been hitherto concealed from view. The horizon is now so widened as to

enable our spiritual vision to survey the totality of existence.”\* The appeal of religion is thus made to direct personal consciousness. “If God exists,” says the Abbot Soyen Shaku, “he must be felt. If he is love, he must become the fact of one’s inmost life.”†

The second great doctrine of medieval Buddhism, Salvation by Faith, was founded on the Primal Vow of the Buddha Amitâbha, or Amitâyus, the Buddha of Boundless Light or Boundless Life. Light and Life can never long be dissociated in the conceptions by which our human thought seeks to express its trust in the Power encompassing and sustaining the world and man. Early in our era this gracious figure appears in Buddhist theology. His origin is unknown, but his connexion with light and his dwelling in a western paradise where no mountains barred the way to intercourse, suggest that elements of Persian thought have been combined with Buddhist ideas. As a Buddha-to-be he is the hero of a Sanskrit book entitled the “Description of the Land of Bliss.” Its author is ‘unknown’, and its date uncertain, but it was translated into Chinese about A.D. 150, and its

\* Sermons, by the Right Rev. Soyen Shaku (1906), Chicago, p. 192.

† *Ibid.*, p. 196 f.

popularity is indicated by the fact that no fewer than eleven more versions can be traced in the next 500 years. A smaller work of the same kind followed, and was translated in A.D. 402. The cultus founded on them acquired immense vogue in China and Mongolia, and was in due time carried into Japan.

A hermit named Dharmâkara, so Çâkyâ-Muni related the story on his favourite seat upon the Vulture's Peak, might have entered after long prayer and meditation into Final Peace. But he looked back on the world and saw his fellow-men lying in ignorance and sin. The path by which he had climbed was steep and difficult, and he vowed that he would not become a Buddha unless he could deliver the dying believer who had meditated on him with tranquil thoughts from the entanglements of past evil. When, after protracted labours and self-denials, he became the Buddha of Boundless Light, he knew that his vow was made good. It became the symbol of assurance to those who looked to him in faith. By its might rescue from the bondage of sin was guaranteed. Even one act of trust in calling on his name as death approached sufficed to obtain the divine escort to the Happy Land in the Far West. There selfishness and strife disappeared in love and peace. In the

presence of Infinite Light the saints could enjoy God for ever.

The worship of Amitâbha was in due time carried into Japan under the shortened form of the divine name Amida. In the seventh and eighth centuries Japanese students studied at some of the chief centres of Buddhist devotion in China, and some recent writers have endeavoured to trace the remarkable development of the doctrine of Salvation by Faith in Japan to Nestorian influence. It has yet, however, to be shown that Nestorian Christianity contained it in any form which could have affected Buddhist thought. Not till the twelfth century, however, did the Amida-cultus gain greater religious value under the teaching of Honen (1133-1212). He was the only son of a military chief who fell mortally wounded in the civil wars. The little lad, reared in the atmosphere of battle, attempted to kill his father's enemy. The dying officer bade him put away revenge, "Henceforth pray only for salvation for yourself and your fellow men." So at nine years old the boy was placed under the care of a Buddhist monk, and devoted himself to a life of sacred study. In laborious years he read through the 5,000 volumes of the Chinese canon five times. The writings of a famous commentator, Zendo, on the "Discourse on the Land of

Bliss" impressed him deeply, and in 1175 he had reached the twofold conviction of human sinfulness and the saving power of Amida's name. These were the themes of his preaching. Three emperors became his pupils, and a multitude of hearers and correspondents of all classes followed him, independent of the technicalities of the sects. His disciples told of his visions of saints, Zendo, and Amida himself. They saw his person transfigured; like St. Francis he preached to the birds and the snakes. He lived in the spirit of his letter to a lady of high degree:

" Think in love and sympathy of any beings who have the earnest desire for the Land of Purity, and utter the Buddha's name, as if they were your parents or children, though they may dwell in any place even outside the cosmic system. Help those who are in need of material things in this world. Endeavour to quicken faith in any in whom a germ of it is seen. Deem all these to be services done to Amida."

The critics of the new school of the Jodo Shu or Sect of the Pure Land observed, however, that it still attached value to good works; its teaching on the ripening of merit and the duty of repeating the sacred Name in adoring homage all involved an element of *Ji-riki* or Self-exertion. These were denounced as "temporary expedients." The logic of faith demanded that all

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outward action should be purged away, so that pure trust in *Ta-riki*, the exertion of Another, should alone remain. This step was taken by Honen's disciple, Shinran (1173-1262), founder of the Jodo Shin Shu, or True Sect of the Pure Land.

Sprung from an aristocratic family, he had the misfortune to lose his father at four years old and his mother at eight. The year after this second bereavement he entered a monastery on Mount Hiei near the old capital at Kyoto. An immense and powerful settlement, containing (it is said) no less than 3,000 establishments, spread over hill and valley, and it was for centuries a hotbed of political intrigue. Honen had himself quitted it, like another teacher a generation before, Ryonen Shonin, who was bidden by Amida in a vision to clear out of Hiei as from a den of thieves. Shinran was disquieted by the same unrest. Books, study, prayer, failed to give him peace. But one day he knelt before an image of Kwan-non, the Japanese equivalent of the Chinese Kwan-yin, the Indian Avalokiteçvara, by theological accommodation Son of Amida, who deigned to say, "Go to Honen, and he will teach you." Under his instruction he began to preach, and, like the Wesleys, wrought his faith into hymns, which are still sung in the temples to this

day. He founded his teaching on the Original Vow. The Buddha of Boundless Light and Life possessed infinite mercy and infinite wisdom. These attributes involved the Power to save. The full development of these principles was not long postponed. One day Kanesane of the great house of Fujiwara came to Honen with an unexpected proposal : "I want to find among your disciples a husband for my daughter. I desire him by means of a concrete example to demonstrate that the religion of salvation by faith in 'Amida is one which concerns the layman as well as the monk. It will be for the good of the country if we can show that the family and not the monastery is the true focus of religion."\* Honen's choice fell on Shinran. For more than a year he could not bring himself to undo his vows. But at last, as three centuries later Luther married Katherine de Bora, Shinran married the lady Tamahi no Miya. The breach with the old order was complete. The principle of Works, of external morality, of religious rule, of judging a man by his meat or drink, his celibacy or marriage, was set aside by the higher principle of Salvation by Faith.

The advocates of the elder tradition con-

\* Rev. Arthur Lloyd, *Shinran and his Work* (Tokyo, 1910), p. 23.

temptuously called the new teaching "the easy way." That was not the experience of Shinran. Like a modern Evangelical Christian he realised the obstacles of the self-satisfied intellect, and the stubborn will. There is nothing harder, he affirmed, for the heretic, the evil-minded, and the proud, than to lay aside their self-reliance, and submit to be saved by Another. Those who reached the "true belief" with its three elements—sincerity, faith, and joy—expressed their gratitude by the constant repetition of the Sacred Name. It is easy to see how it might degenerate into an unspiritual formalism. But to the founder it was a privilege and not a burden. It was the symbol of joyous participation in the great process of the world's deliverance.

" Shoreless is the sea of misery caused by birth and death,

And we for a long time were sunk beneath its waves;  
But Amida, taking us into the ship of his great  
mercy,

By that alone carries us across safely."

Modern teachers are anxiously on their guard against the supposition that the believer wins any merit by chanting Amida's name, or is entitled to any reward. He must be first in a state of grace, and then his homage will rise out of humble

thankfulness for such deliverance. Who was he that for his sake the future Lord of Life and Light should have submitted himself to the long passion of endeavour needful to rescue him from his ignorance and sin! The deputy for a certain district was once asked why he carried a rosary into the deliberative assembly. "Since I was chosen as the representative of the people in this province," he answered, "I must do the best for their convenience. I must be fully just, patient, and unselfish. But as I am a man, if I should trust to my own will, I should perhaps be prejudiced, passionate, and selfish. Therefore I always carry this rosary to command my evil temper, because whenever I see it I remember the mercy of Buddha, and I return to the right."

Christian theologians debated whether faith was a *donum* or an *opus*, the issue of a gift of God or an act of man. The thinkers of Japan encountered the same difficulty, and found the same solution. Faith is not acquired, it is bestowed. It is not earned by conduct, it is granted out of immeasurable love. "The Buddha," we read, "confers this heart." Its distinctive mark, accordingly, is its inner assurance. Belief by Self-exertion cannot afford rest to the heart. The worshipper asks himself,

“ Shall I surely attain salvation or shall I not?” and thus, it is observed, “ what is called faith is in reality doubt.” It is only faith by the Power of Another that can sustain him in the various duties of the Five Relations, a piece of Confucian morality grafted on to Buddhist ethics.\* Such assurance naturally leads to a doctrine equivalent to the “ final perseverance of the saints.” Those who have received the gift by the Buddha’s mercy remain in what is called the “ Company of the Steadfast.” “ This is the stage,” said St. Renniyo (1415-1499), “ in the world of impurity.” Nirvāna is to be attained in the Pure Land. But on what principles was the believing heart bestowed? Christian theology ascribed the difference between those who possessed the saving faith and those without it to an act of divine election.† The Japanese solution, following the teaching of the Lotus, ran on other lines. The Original Vow of Amida was of universal application. The Buddha confers the heart upon all beings.

This does not mean that the gift is granted immediately and unconditionally to each one

\* Sovereign and minister, husband and wife, father and son, elder brother and younger, friends.

† Cp. the ancient Hindu teaching, “ the Self chooses them as his own ” (S.B.E. xv., pp. 11, 40).

here and now. It can only operate through existing circumstances, and these are due to the agelong series of cause and effect in life after life under the Law of the Deed. In the physical world no one would pray for a miracle which would involve an interruption of the natural order. Might it not be said that the transcendent operation of Amida's grace would involve a similar interruption of the moral order? The answer was that the gift is after all relative to our power to receive it, and that depends on the whole prior history of the soul, which may have generated hidden energies visible to the Infinite Light, known to no outward observer, and unsuspected by the soul itself. "To understand how we are saved in our ordinary life by the Great Vow of Amida," says St. Renniyo, "is to know that this is the result of the growth of merit in a previous state of existence, and that it is not by our own strength. Being bestowed by the extraneous power of the Buddha's wisdom, we know this help to be the result of the Great Vow. This is Karma being completed in an ordinary lifetime."

In this sense Amida's deliverance is not unconditional. The soul must be prepared to welcome its advent by its own past. Salvation is contingent on the capacity to be saved. The

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whole prior sum of his spiritual or unspiritual life opens the door or bars the access when Amida knocks. Salvation is not an absolute act of divine mercy, conquering the will that might conceivably choose to go on sinning for ever and ever. At the approach of the redeeming love up starts the sinner's Karma in resistance. What, then, becomes of the hope of universal salvation?

It is a theoretical difficulty but it disappears from the practical side. The foundation of the doctrine is really laid in the actual experience of moral regeneration. The postulate of all higher religion, the triumph of the Good, enthrones itself on the perception that humanity is one. Shinran, we are told, "used the words 'Brothers within the Four Seas.' Faith by the Power of Another proceeds from Amida. Thus Amida is Father and Mother; all within the Four Seas are brothers. The Chinese call foreigners barbarians. Foreigners call China uncivilised. Both are wrong. Between heaven and earth there is no spot not to be reached." Each fresh conquest over evil strengthens the conviction that Amida's saving purpose includes the whole, and cannot be frustrated. Boundless Mercy, Infinite Wisdom, Immeasurable Life and Light, may be trusted to find the right way at the right time.

“ Granted (says a modern Shin Shu preacher) that there are some that do not yet know the name of the Buddha who is their Father as well as ours, can we believe that he will ever forsake them, and not wait for his opportunity to give them his saving benediction? Nay, more, do we not hope that when we have reached that city, our Father will give us his permission to go ourselves to seek our friends and bring them home, so that ere long we may all be gathered around his knees. Therefore we wipe away our tears, and leave the world quietly and peacefully, for what we see before us is the light of universal salvation.”\*

This is the modern application of a much older aim. • Among the verses of ancient date carried from China to Japan in the seventh century A.D. was the following :

“ There are beings without limit,  
Let me vow to take them all unto the further  
shore;  
There are depravities without number,  
Let me take the vow to extinguish them all;  
There are truths without end,  
Let me take the vow to know them all;  
There is the way of Buddha without comparison,  
Let me take the vow to accomplish it.”

Surely here at least, however diverse in expression, the faiths of the East and the West have met together.

\* *The Praises of Amida*, translated from the Japanese of Tada Kanai, by Rev. Arthur Lloyd, M.A. (Tokyo, 1907), p. 137.



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*Epilogue*

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THE reader who has followed the development of Buddhism in the preceding sketches will have noticed that one fundamental idea remains unchanged through all its phases. The same is true in the manifold varieties of Christian evolution. Both seek to effect the deliverance of mankind from sin, and cut off the entail of retributory suffering and continued sinfulness. Both present a Person as an object of faith, who in a human life devotes himself to teaching. The One had been prepared for the attainment of Perfect Wisdom by the steadfast efforts of a long series of antecedent lives. The Other was endowed at his baptism with the gift of the Holy Spirit, or (according to a later view) was born by its agency. These two careers are of unequal length, with dissimilar endings, but between the traditions of their personal incidents, the growth of their disciples' fellowship, their ethical teaching, and their missionary aims, there are marked resemblances. Both result in the creation of religious communities for the maintenance of the

spiritual life of their members. Both produce records of early ministry which form the nucleus of Scriptures, and these in their turn become the accepted standards of truth and the guides of conduct. Both ultimately interpret the person of their Founders by philosophical conceptions linking them with the Infinite and Eternal Source of all existence. Both present salvation under the guise of participation in the Divine Nature, and picture its realisation in the adoring communion of the soul with the Author and Finisher of its faith. There are many diversities between them as there are within the internal development of each. One deep divergence must be named. The Buddhist scheme proclaims the ultimate salvation of all beings. Christianity in its most widespread historic forms still condemns an uncounted number to endless torment and unceasing sin.

The thoughtful student will not be in haste to reckon up an account on either side. He will see that each entered the field of history in contact with ideas which belonged to particular forms of race-consciousness or mental and moral development. Each has dropped some of the hopes—or the denials—which appeared vital to the first believers. Yet each claims explicitly or implicitly some kind of finality, some secret of

Absolute truth. Each rests on some form of Revelation, some manifestation of Perfect Wisdom, some gift of knowledge and life from God to man. The seeds of truth have produced varying fruits in varying civilisations. National ~~temperaments~~, intellectual cultures, social and political evolutions, have shaped them into moulds that often seem far distant from each other. But their roots go down into common soil of human thought and experience. The same questions are asked about the conduct of life, and similar answers are given. Will not mutual understanding draw us into mutual sympathy? "There are diversities of workings," said St. Paul, "but the same God, who worketh all things in all." Is there not truth in this for the Church of Humanity as well as for the Church of Christ? The history of religion, it is now recognised, is not to be explained out of illusion or fraud; it belongs to that great process of the education of the race in which poetry, art, science, philosophy, law, are all instruments of the Spirit. "In our earthly experience," said the lamented Professor Troeltsch in his last utterance, "the divine Life is not One but Many. But to discover the One in the Many is the special task of Love."



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## *List of Works on Buddhism*

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THE following list is limited to English works, including translations from Buddhist texts, and the books of modern scholars founded on them. The earlier texts are arranged according to the divisions of the Canon of the Pāli Scriptures preserved in Ceylon, Burma, and Siam. Only a very small portion of the immense literature of the so-called "Great Vehicle" (Mahā-Yāna) is at present available for English students.

### I

*Vinaya*, or Rules of the Order, "Sacred Books of the East" (S.B.E.), vols. xiii., xvii., xx., tr. T. W. Rhys Davids and H. Oldenberg.

### II

*Sutta*, containing the Buddha's teachings or discourses, with incidental narrative, arranged in five collections (*nikāyas*).

1. *Digha Nikāya*, tr. Professor and Mrs. Rhys Davids as the "Dialogues of the Buddha," 3 vols., 1899-1921.

2. *Majjhima Nikāya*, "The First Fifty Discourses," tr. the Bhikkhu Silācāra, 2 vols., 1912-13.

3. *Samyutta Nikāya*, "The Book of the Kindred Sayings," parts i. and ii., tr. Mrs. Rhys Davids, 1917 and 1922.

4. *Anguttara Nikāya*, sections i.-iii., tr. E. R. J. Gooneratne (Galle, Ceylon), 1913.

5. *Khuddaka Nikāya*, including numerous works of which the following may be read in English :

(a) *Khuddaka-pātha*, tr. Childers, "Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society," 1870.

(b) *Dhammapada*, tr. Max Müller, S.B.E. x., 1881.

(c) *Udāna*, tr. Major-General D. M. Strong, 1902.

(d) *Iti-vuttaka*, tr. J. H. Moore (New York), 1908.

(e) *Sutta Nipāta*, tr. Fausböll, S.B.E. x., 1881.

(f) *Thera Gāthā*, tr. Mrs. Rhys Davids, "Psalms of the Brethren," 1913.

(g) *Theri Gāthā*, tr. Mrs. Rhys Davids, "Psalms of the Sisters," 1909.

(h) *Jātaka*, tr. Cowell and others, 6 vols., 1895-1907; index vol., 1913. Cp. Rhys Davids, vol. i., 1880, with important introduction.

### III

*Abhidhamma*, comprising books on Buddhist philosophy, ethical and psychological.

1. *Dhamma-Sanjani*, tr. Mrs. Rhys Davids, "A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics," 1900.

2. *Kathā-Vatthu*, tr. Shwe Zan Aung and Mrs. Rhys Davids, "Points of Controversy," 1915.

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Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* includes many valuable articles.

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